

FORGETFULNESS
OF
GOD
THE
GREAT PLAGUE
OF
MAN'S HEART,
AND
Consideration
One of the
Principal Means to Cure it.

By *W. D. Master of Arts, and once Fellow of
King's Colledge Cambridge.*

*Contra salutem propriam cogites nihil; minus dixi Contra,
Præter dixisse debueram.*

Μελέτη τὰ πάντα: *Periand. dict.*
Meditation is all.

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17

25th March 1840

Dear Sir

I have the pleasure to inform you

that

the same has been forwarded

to you by the same conveyance

as the others which I have the honor

to acknowledge

I am, Sir, very respectfully

Yours obedient servant



To the Worthy JOHN
LUPTON, Esq; Head
of the Family of LUP-
TON, Eternal Happi-
ness.

T*Hough my Personal O-
bligations to you are
very many and consi-
derable, and may very well
screw me up to a very high
strain of gratitude; (and me-
thinks I find my self very ready
in this particular to do you
right, and to acknowledge my
self very much bound to you and*

Epistle Dedicatory.

your Family ; yet) I must say, I honour you more for the Latitude you take in doing good to all, and promoting every good Design that comes within your reach, without the least Hesitancy : Orphans, and Minors, and such as are destitute of help, to whom you have begrudg'd neither pains nor cost, will plead for you, I hope, better than my Tongue or Pen can. There are none that know you, but must confess, how close a Friend you are to Religion and Learning, and at what rates you would promote them. Surely it had been a Crime in
me,

Epistle Dedicatory.

me, having so good occasion, to have conceal'd your Worth and Merits towards me, whom you have intrusted with your best Treasure, and given me all encouragement and help to their good Education, not regarding the Slanders of some that would make themselves seem wiser in such Affairs, wherein they have been little vers'd, than others of far greater experience. I know you need not such an Orator as I, whose Virtues will more commend you, than the best Pen and Ink can do. However, I will ease my self a little of the burthen under which I lye
and

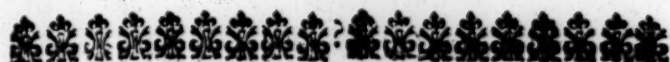
Epistle Dedicatory.

and make some publick acknowledgment of my Obligations to you, wishing this Practical Treatise may come so near your heart, as that it may do you everlasting good; and that God would continue to bless your Family, as he hath hitherto done, that your Posterity may not degenerate from the exemplary practices of their Ancestors. So prayeth,

*Sir, Your most obliged,
thankful Servant,*

W. D.

To



*To the Practical Reader, for
whom this Treatise is in-
tended.*

TIs a knowing Age in which we live, or at least pretends very much to Knowledge, or it could not be so wicked: yea, the Atheist himself (that's drown'd in the depth of Ignorance) and is so blind a Fool, that he saith there is no God, when his own Being and Tongue wherewith he speaks will give him the Lye; yet will pretend to Knowledge, and think he hath a greater share than others, because he can talk at a more desperate rate, and is priviledg'd by his wickedness to laugh at that, at which a sober man would tremble.

One

To the Reader.

One would wonder to think how Knowledge (at least such as is real, and not pretended only) should be so mischievous, and produce such woful effects as it hath done, abroad in the world, when it is in part the Excellency of Man; and the Wise Man tells us, without it the Soul cannot be good, *Prov.* 19. 2. And God complains by the Prophet, that his People are destroyed for want of knowledge; *Hos.* 4. 6. But the *Solution* is easie; It is either an impertinent, or crude and indigested knowledge, that brings forth such Monstrous Births. The Lord *Bacon* tells us, that a superficial knowledge of Nature makes an Atheist, but a deep search into things produceth a sound assent to the Being and Providence of God.

It is indeed a slight and overly Knowledge of God, and other things

To the Reader.

things related to him, that is the Disease of this Age, and hath brought forth such pernicious effects; and the proper cure of this Distemper would be frequent, sober, impartial Consideration; than which nothing tends more to ripen and concoct our Knowledge, and to diffuse its happy Influence to the Heart and Life: I have therefore chosen this Subject, that I might shew how easie it is for Knowing Men to sink into Forgetfulness of God, and so run loose to all wickedness in the same degree, that they forget God: And that they can never prevent this mischief, nor recover out of it, but by frequent retirement, and impartial Meditation. Never any man was wise that was not Considerate, (whatever frisking Wit he might have) much less was ever any man soundly Religious,
and

To the Reader.

and understood the Worth and Excellency of Religion, and how much it doth befriend his truest satisfaction in this world, that did not get out of the noise of worldly affairs and business, and think of God, his Word and Works, his Son and Spirit, and his own Immortal Soul, and greatest Concerns, with true and frequent seriousness.

Fickleness, and volability of confused thoughts, is the shame and disgrace of Humane Nature, since it is become degenerate; and a carnal mind, which every one is born with into the world, takes it for its greatest pleasure, to turn about like a Weather-Cock to all variety of thoughts, and can endure to stay upon nothing, nor be confin'd, though to the best Objects. It's the greatest part of the misery of a Man yet estranged from God, that he can
not

To the Reader.

not endure to be stak'd to any serious thoughts, though for a small portion of time; whereby it becomes impossible for him (in the ordinary course of Providence) to return to his right mind: You must think, and think again, of the sad and woful consequences of a Flesh-pleasing life, before ever you will escape the tempting Baits of sensuality and worldly pleasures.

The Reason of Man is so much captivated to his Senses, whilst he is in the present condition, and a Sojourner in the world, that till serious thoughts recover him, he is like to die and perish in this miserable Bondage. Frequent Meditation, and fervent Prayer, would retrieve his Liberty, and save him from the Precipice of Vice and Sin, on which an inconsiderate Man will adventure to stand without fear, till he feel himself

To the Reader.

himself tumbling down, and little or no power to stop, till he comes to the bottom of it. Men will make a shift to decline the most cutting Truths, and such as have the sharpest point, and find out an Evasion for the omission of the plainest Duties, by some witty Repartees they can return to these matters, till serious, deep, and impartial Recognition of them charge them home, and make them prick to the Heart. Till then, what wonder if the inconsiderate Man go with the Oxe to the Slaughter, and with the Fool to the Correction of the Stocks? Till this Dart of Meditation strike thorough his Liver, he will hasten as a Bird to the Snare, not knowing that it is for life, Prov. 7. 22, 23.

Reader, if thou wouldst not hazard the Favour of God, nor lose Eternal Happiness, and ruine thine
Immortal

To the Reader.

Immortal Soul, nor run desperately upon Everlasting Misery, think on these things often and impartially, bind them continually upon thy Heart, and tye them about thy Neck, *Prov. 6. 21.* otherwise thou wilt mourn at the last, when Soul and Body (which thou didst so much pamper) are lost, and say, *How have I hated Instruction, and my heart (thorough inconsideracy) despised Reproof; nor obeyed the voice of mine own Reason, nor inclined mine Ear, when from the Word and Works of God she would have instructed me, Pro. 5. 12, 13.*

There is a Spiritual as well as an Earthly Husbandry, which is the ground of all holy thriving and fruitfulness; and Consideration (if any thing) would Till the Heart, and Manure the Affections, and root Grace in the inward, and make it put forth and flourish in the outward man; and God would second

it

To the Reader.

it with his Heavenly Showres; and
bless the springing thereof, *Psal.* 65.
10. And (as Solomon saith) *He that*
Tilleth his Land shall be satisfied with
bread, *Prov.* 12. 11. so much more
he that Tilleth his Heart by daily
Meditation, and exercise of Grace,
shall find encrease: And I may tru-
ly say in Allusion to that in *Prov.* 13.
23. Much spiritual encrease is in
the Tillage of the Heart, but there is
that which is destroyed for want of
Consideration and Judgment. I shall
detain the Reader no longer from
the Treatise it self, if he hath any
time to spare for such a Subject; but
only recommend him, and the Mat-
ters here mentioned, to the blessing
of God, that they may succeed to
his greater Glory, and their Eternal
Felicity that may read it; which is
the unfeigned Prayer of him that
is,

Your true Servant in the Lord,
and well-wisher,

W. D.



Psal. 50. 22. *Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces and there be none to deliver.*

בִּינוּ נָא זֶרֶת שׁוֹכְחֵי אֱלֹהִים מִן־אֲשֶׁרוֹף וְאִין מַצִּיל

L.xxii. Σιύετε δὴ πάντα οἱ ἐπλανθάνοντες τῷ θεῷ,
μήποτε ἀρπάσῃ καὶ ἐμὴ ἡ ὁρμή μου.

IT's not much material whether *David* or *Asaph* were the Author of this Psalm: some ascribe it to one, some to the other: The reason of the Doubt seems to be the *Inscription* or the *Title* of the Psalm לְעַסָּף: which may signify either to *Asaph*, or for *Asaph*: It is most likely that *David* composed the Psalm and directed it to *Asaph* or his successors, that had the charge of the Musick of the Temple, to compose and prick it to some Tune: But however the Scope and Drift of the Psalm is to reprove the *Jews* who had transformed the Worship of God into meer

Pomp and Ceremony, and were come up to that degree of Blindness and Absurdity, that they thought their Sacrifices and Oblations, and the constant performances of all that was visible to the Eye, was highly accepted of God, though their hearts were full of the filth of Lust and Concupiscence, and all manner of odious Impiety; hence one of their great Rabbins sticks not to expound (that in the 66. *Psal.* 18. v. *If I regard iniquity in my heart, God will not hear my prayers*) interrogatively: viz. Though I regard iniquity, &c. will not God hear my Prayers? Yes surely he will: Hence they are charged by the Prophet, for this very Crime, and God protests against such service with great Indignation: as if he had never instituted and appointed it: *Who hath required this at your hands?* *Isa.* 1. 12. And he upbraids them with their outward oblations, as if they had bin meerly their own Invention, and wholly beside his order: *Isai.* 66. 3. *He that killeth an Ox, is as if he slew a man, he that sacrificeth a Lamb, as if he cut off a Dogs neck:* and yet its notorious enough that God commanded these Sacrifices: why then doth he not approve the Execution of his own commands? The truth is, God appointed these External Rites, and visible Symbols of his worship: But it was in Conjunction with the inward and more principal worship; and whilst they came in Company with that they were accepted; But when they began to Divorce what God had tyed together by such a flat necessity: And when they made no Conscience of the Moral and Spiritual part of Gods worship, but all their care was for the Ceremonial part; It was high time for God to shew how he was dis-
 flasted

stasted, with such a bodily service as this, that
 had neither life nor spirit, and therefore nothing
 that suited with his Nature, who is a Spirit, and
 must be worshipped in spirit and truth, as well as
 in form and shew : And therefore the Psalmist the
 better to awake them, summons them before the
 Tribunal of God, as ready to proceed to a fear-
 ful sentence against them. This manner of speech
 by Parables, Types and Representations of things
 that were not, (but supposed to be) were schemes
 of Rhetorick familiar to that People for the more
 powerful working on the Affections. But here
 God by a Prolepsis being about to judge, is intro-
 duced with circumstances of Majesty and Terror,
v. 3. Our God shall come, and shall not keep silence,
a Fire shall devour before him, and shall be very
Tempestuous round about him : with some allusion
 to the dreadful appearance of God at Mount Sinai,
 when he gave the Law, & now comes to require an
 account of it, with as terrible an appearance, *v. 4. He*
shall call to the Heavens above, (that is the Angels)
 to cite and gather these guilty Sinners before Him,
 that were like to speed so much the worse, because
 they were in league with God, Sanctified by an
 external Covenant made with him, but yet trea-
 cherously and perfidiously broken : therefore call-
 ed Saints ; *Gather my Saints together those that have*
made a Covenant with me by Sacrifice, *v. 5.* Then
 comes in the charge, *ver. 7. Hear O my people,*
 which is amplified to the end of the Psalm : and
 the folly and unbecomingness of such a worship,
 detected and set forth to the life, which that stu-
 pid people presented him with instead of Service
 worthy so glorious a Majesty: Do you think that

— **Bullocks, and He-Goats are things that I Regard:**
 If I had such a delight in these as you take me to
 have, *I have no need to come to you; for every Beast*
of the Forest is mine, and the Cattle upon a thousand
Hills, I know all the Fowles of the Mountains, v. 10,
11. If I were hungry I would not tell thee. See
 what gross conceits they had of God as if he had
 an appetite after the flesh of Bulls and the blood
 of Goats v. 12, 13. whether they were so sottish
 as to think that God did feed upon such Diet as
 this, and did take pleasure in it, by a plain and
 direct apprehension; it matters not much; be
 sure, they were guilty of such a Sin by conse-
 quence, and interpretation, whilst they could go
 on with so much confidence in the oblation of such
 Sacrifices, when their hearts were perfectly desti-
 tute of any Love and Reverence of God, and
 their hands were full of Rapine and Blood, and
 used no attention of Mind to consider what these
 outward Sacrifices did signify to them: And then
 in the 14. ver. he shews them the true and ac-
 ceptable worship, after he had confuted their
 blasphemous apprehensions; which consists of two
 principal parts in which all the rest is included.
 First, Heartly Thanksgiving, for what they have
 and do receive. Secondly, And fervent prayer
 for what they want, by which a better Testimony
 is given to God, than by their richest oblations.
 And this the very Heathen could discern by their
 Candle, *Immunis aram*, saith *Horace*, &c. They
 confessed that a Soul breathing forth its self in
 holy Hymns is more acceptable to God, than the
 richest Gums or sweetest Wood that can fume up-
 on the Altar: But these Jews were so Intoxi-
 cated

cated, that they thought they did a high favour to God, whilst they took his name into their mouths, and declared his Statutes, though they perfectly hated to be reform'd; though they consented to these, and were guilty of Adultery, and gave their Mouth to ill, and their Tongue to frame deceit: yea they made nothing of casting Slanders and Reproaches upon their dearest Friends, *ver. 17, 18, 19, 20.* Yea, and to compleat their wickedness to the full, they interpreted the patience of God towards them all this while as an approbation of their abominable Wickedness, *ver. before the Text.* *These things hast thou done, and I kept silence,* that is, I patiently forbore thee a long time, and thou thoughtest that I was altogether such an one as thy self. Then follows the Sentence; *But I will reprove thee, and set them in order before thine eyes;* and make thee feel what it is to mock God, and be guilty of such Wickedness.

The words are the Application of this that hath been taught in the former part of the *Psalms*, That since God will upon no terms be reconciled to Iniquity, nor hold his peace always at those practices which his Soul hateth, though the persons being guilty, set them off with the Paint and Varnish of the most specious outward Observances, and make a most boasting mention of his Name, and cry, *the Temple of the Lord.* Since this is Gods peremptory Resolution, be wise, *Now consider this ye that forget God, lest I tear you in pieces, and there be none to deliver.*

Where you have:

1. The Use that they and we are to make of the righteous and impartial Sentence that God

will pass upon Wickedness, dress it how we will ;
— or an Exhortation to a weighty Duty , NOW
CONSIDER THIS.

2. The persons that are to make this use of it,
— or to whom the Exhortation is directed, that is
such as forget God, YE THAT FORGET GOD.

3. The Reasons to enforce this Duty upon these
forgetful Ones is: פֶּן-אֲשַׁרֶּיךָ

1. From the Extremity ; **LEST I TEAR YOU
IN PIECES**, as the Lion teareth in pieces the
Prey it lights upon.

2. From the unavoidableness of Gods Wrath,
and the impossibility of Escape ; **AND THERE
BE NONE TO DELIVER**, or snatch out of my
hands. The foregoing Metaphor from the Lion be-
ing continued ; see *Hosea* 5. 14. *For I will be unto
Ephraim as a Lion, and as a young Lion to the
House of Judah ; I, even I, will tear and go away,
I will take away, and none shall rescue him. And*

Micah 5. 8. *And the Remnant of Jacob shall be
in the midst of many people, as a Lion among the
Beasts of the Forrest, as a young Lyon among the
flocks of sheep ; who if he goeth through, both tread-
eth down, and teareth in pieces, and none can deli-
ver.*

The Points that enwrap the whole substance
of the words are **THESE TWO** :

First, That *Forgetfulness* of God, is a fearful
and dangerous sin ; and will expose such as are
guilty of it to the unavoidable wrath of God.

Secondly, That *Consideration* is one of the prin-
cipal means on our part to bring us to the *Re-
membrance* of God at the first, and to prevent
forgetfulness afterwards ; or to recover us out

of

of that degree of forgetfulness into which we may possibly fall.

The method that I shall take to infuse the *first Doctrine*, and to get it into our hearts and Lives, shall be ; 1. To begin with the Understanding, by which Door every Truth must enter, that can make any solid operation upon the other Faculties, to prepare them for practice ; and to shew,

1. What it is to forget God in the General.

2. More particularly, who they are that are guilty of this sin.

And 3. I shall shew you the heinousness and danger of this sin, in the Inferences ; and then on

4. To a closer Application.

First, What it is to forget God in the General ? To which I answer,

To forget God, is

Not to have that impress of his Existence, Perfections and Relations to us, upon our several Faculties ; nor those frequent, reverential, and affectionate thoughts of him, that do enable us to a Sovereign Love and Obedience to him.

1. In which Description, Note ; First, That forgetfulness is not the act of the Memory only in this place, but there is some of this poison in all the Faculties : for the Rule is solid, and worth the observation ; That no Act is compleat that is not the act of the whole Man : Understanding, Will, and Executive Power ; because they are united in one Frame ; and there is no action, that's virtuous and vicious (for that I mean by moral) to which every one of these Wheels of the Soul do not contribute some-

thing; and therefore if the hand of a Clock or Watch move regularly, every one of the inward Waeels is moved rightly, and is free from fault or blame; but if the hand go false, all the inward parts of the Fabrick move amiss, though perchance the fault lye principally in one peculiar part, but yet the error is propagated to the whole. So if any action of man be faulty, the whole man is culpable, and the fault is either originally, or by derivation in every power and faculty of the Man; so Love to God supposeth. 1. A Knowledg worthy of him in the Understanding, Complacency in the Will; endeavours of Conformity to, and union with him in the powers that are to execute, or else the act of Love is not rational and compleat. To have some motion in the will or affections, that is not caused by a foregoing notice or consideration, that is weighty of him, is a Fanatical Love; a flash that will be as soon out as in, and never set his hand and his feet a work in his service: so we are said to *know God*, when we have not only a notion of him in the understanding, but suitable motion in the will and affections: *This is Life Eternal to know Thee*, John 17. 3. This is the manner of Scripture, yea and common discourse when we speak of moral Acts (that is) such as persons endued with understanding and free will, do perform.

And though the denomination or name be taken sometime from one faculty, sometime from another, yet the rest are usually implied, or supposed; subservient actions are in common speech, silently implied in the principal: and
hence

hence that Rule that Divines so frequently inculcate; That words of knowledg and sense, imply affections and actions; *The Lord knoweth the way of the Righteous*, that is, so as to approve and justifie it, *Psal. 1. last. Thou didst not lay these things to heart; neither didst thou remember thy latter end*, saith the Prophet *Esay to Babylon, Isa. 47. 7.* that is, thou didst not take it into thy thoughts so as to work upon thy heart, and to get thy self in a readines for that houre. For where there is, or should be a Connexion Train, or Series of Actions, to name one, is to imply all the rest; but most usually, where we are provoked to any duty that will require several distinct acts; the whole duty is named from the leading Act, as here in the Text, *Consider this, &c.* An Object must first be taken into the thoughts, and then be judged weighty, and concerning, before it can have any influence upon the affections and life: and so in the following words, *ye that forget God.* As not remembring God is the first Act to neglect of Duty and Disobedience: but yet sometime the very ultimate and compleitive Act is named, and all the rest implied and presupposed, as in all those Scriptures, where, salvation is promised to obedience: there all the fore-going acts are understood, without which it would not be true obedience. Since therefore the end of this consideration, and thoughtfulness to which wicked men, and such as forget God are exhorted, is that they may clearly discern his excellency above all things; and by this discovery kindle the highest love to him in the heart; and by that prepare for the
 req-

readiest obedience. Therefore I define forgetfulness to be, the want of such knowledge and consideration of Gods essence and perfections, as is necessary to produce the highest Love and Obedience.

2. Note Secondly, That every degree of Remembering God, and thinking on him, yea though it bewith some degrees of Love and Pleasure, Praise and Thankfulness, will not acquit a man from the Dreadful Sin of Forgetfulness; If the thoughts be not so frequent, so magnificent, as to produce a love suitable to his Nature, (*that is*) Transcending all other Love, whereby the soul is then prepared for the highest obedience: otherwise he that is defective in this high and sovereign degree is still condemned among those that are here said to forget God. So much in Answer to the first question; What it is to forget God in general? and for explanation to the answer.

Secondly, who they are more particularly, that forget God?

To which I answer, though I might reckon up as many as their are distinct and particular Sins that prevail in distinct and particular men: As the Proud, the Envious, the Adulterous, the Blaspheinous: And so multiply particulars to a vast number. For every one of these may be properly said to forget God; Yet I will confine my self to these three sorts;

1. Those that remember not the great attributes of God, and the Relations wherein they stand to him.

2. Those that think not on his sacred and venerable word.

3. Those

3. Those that overlook his most observable works.

Its some great defect in one or all these that doth both breed and feed all other Forgetfulness of God, specified in any prevailing sins whatsoever, because the forgetting of any these three grand points of remembrance, betrays to all impiety towards God, all unrighteousness towards men, and all ill usage and government of a mans self, which *three Capital Sins*, imply all mortal wickedness whatsoever.

I shall begin with the first ;

First, Those may be said notoriously to forget God, that remember not the great Attributes that are so essential to him ; we are not able to see his naked essence: 'Tis therefore by his Attributes that we come to know him, at least in this Life. And he that wants a competent understanding of these, and that in such a measure as to Empower his understanding and will to acts, that become such glorious perfections, lies open unto every sensible object, to be drawn away and enticed to any practice, though never so wicked, whereby he may come to enjoy, what he doth thus Idolize, for want of a better object.

But *I* will more particularly insist upon two or three of those Relations, which every wicked man either (1.) wants a right knowledge of, or (2.) doth not consider ; and every one that doth not consider must needs be a wicked man.

1. *First*, they consider not that God is their Creator, & gave them that Being and Perfections which they so ungratefully abuse to his dishonour : They think not what an obligation this is to the highest
Love

Love, Gratitude, and Obedience; What a wicked blindness is this to live and go about the world, and to use the very Soul and Body that God hath given thee and yet, to look no higher than thy Father that begot thee, and thy Mother that brought thee forth: *Woe unto him that saith to a Stock, thou art my Father, and to a Stone thou hast brought me forth,* Jer. 2. 27. Canst thou think that thole eyes were made to look no higher, or dost think that thou art solely or principally indebted unto them for that Being, and Wisdom that advanceth thee so far above other Creatures? Such a thought, yea the want of a quite contrary thought, will debase thee as much below, as now thou art exalted above other Creatures. But yet be it never so absurd: This is the woful case and condition of the far greatest part of men. One would think that if the Remembrance of so plain and Confessed a Truth as this is, would acquit a man of this horrid Sin of forgetting God, that none would be Guilty. But alas! there are few that would escape, notwithstanding, I say again few woult escape. They are not many in comparifon that think so frequently and so seasonably of this truth, as to get a full sight of it into the understanding till it fall down before it, and after it hath recovered it self out of extasy and amazement, doth use its authority to the utmost to awaken the other powers to perceive it, that so nothing might hinder the love and service that such a Mercy calls for, nor be able to wipe off so high an obligation: if men were not so prone to forget that they are Creatures, and stand in so near

relation unto God that gave them their breath and being, and doth support them every hour: why is this knowledg so often inculcated in the word of God? for this the Prophet *Daniel* reproveth *Belshazzar*, and his Wives and Concubines, *that they praised the Gods of Silver and Gold, and Brasse which see not, nor hear, nor know, and the God in whose hand thy breath is, and whose are all thy ways, hast thou not glorified, Dan. 5. 23.*

But what do I speak of a single person, and some few others with him: you may see whole Nations sadly charged with it in Scripture. *The Ox knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib; but Israel doth not, my people doth not consider, Isa. 1. 3, 4* and if Gods own people were thus shamefully guilty, what judgment may be passed upon other Nations; if this great Relation every Soul stands in to God were well thought upon; and all things that have a power to inchant the mind, and controll the mighty power of this truth upon the soul, were in a good measure disgraced and turned out of the heart: It could not be that heart and mouth, and life should be so intollerably backward to any serious service of God, as they are in the most.

2. *Secondly*, They forget God that overlook his Sovereignty, and forget that he is the holy, just, and righteous Governour of Mankind. 1. That he is the absolute and universal Sovereign that hath the most unquestionable authority to command and govern the Creatures he hath made. 2. The greatest wisdom to contrive the most perfect Laws for the good of

of all his Subjects. 3. And the most irresistible power to see them executed. 4. And the highest justice to see, that neither Law, nor Subject shall receive any detriment or damage. And if this were believed and considered, would men either desire, or dare to cast off such a Yoke, and transgress such a Law, and provoke such impartial justice? What a monstrous pride must it needs be, that makes a man unwilling to submit to such a Government? And what a presumptuous, befooled, lying heart must that be, that can promise it self indemnity, and think to speed well in a state of disobedience? Let the deceived heart that hath turned thee aside from such an honourable, gainful service, tell thee whom thou canst serve to better purpose, and under whose command thine own welfare would be better promoted. I know thou wouldst abhor the thought of being his servant, who is the first-born of all pride, insolence, and cruelty; and yet there is no possible way of escape, if the Yoke of thy rightful Sovereign be too heavy for thee. May be thou mayst be so void of understanding, as to think if thou hadst none to controll thine actions, but wert thine own Lord, and accountable to none other but thy self; and that thou mightst let out thy heart with a full Reint to all that it desireth; it were a condition to be desired above any other; but hast thou wit enough to manage all thy affairs; strength enough to protect thy self; foresight enough to keep out of a thousand evils, that thy own blindness and nakedness would expose thee to! Thy Lusts and thy Passions would make worse
work

work with thee than all thy other enemies, when they were under no restraint, and thou couldst not long keep out of the fore-mentioned Tyrants hands, the mention of whose dominion over thee made thee so much to start before.

But it may be thou meanest, that this State were the most desirable, if thou hadst wisdom enough to direct thee, and power enough to protect thy self; and fulness enough to supply all thine own wants: and art thou not now ashamed of such a prodigious pride, as would sit down in the Throne of God, and aspire to the divine perfections?

Thou seest whither this inclination leadeth, and what a symptom of destruction it must needs be; and yet be thy case never so bad and desperate, they that will habitually overlook that divine right and sovereignty, and their necessity of subjection, and both from the wisdom and justice of the Laws, and power of the Law-giver; and that there is no wisdom nor happiness like theirs that chearfully obey, must needs entangle themselves in these woful consequences, fall into the absurdest sins, that will but humour and gratifie this proud inclination.

3. They forget God, that are not prevailingly under the power of this thought; that God is their happiness: and that if all the world were theirs, and God should deny the light and beatifical presence of himself they could never find rest or satisfaction: *Let the honour and Majesty of a King, and the Glory of a Kingdom be given unto David; and let him have all the assistance that such a power can afford; to compass the pleasures*

swears that the heart of man can wish for, yet this will not do. In the midst of this fulness and sufficiency he is in streights, *Job* 20. 22. If God withdraw; When thou hidest thy face I am troubled, *Psal.* 30. 7. And when this was wanting, his moisture was turned into the draught of Summer, and his bones were broken; hence he prayeth to God to restore the joy of his salvation, and uphold him with his free spirit; and to make him to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones that he had broken might rejoyce, *Psal.* 51. 8, 12. Who that hath any experience in the world, can be fool enough to believe, that his soul will be quieted with such a Weathercock and Rattle as the world is; and popt off with noise instead of substance; and listen with full contentment to the Sounding Brass and Tinkling Cymbal? Alas! The Bias of a Mans Soul is after something that the world hath not, something like it self; and cannot be truly satisfied with these things, because they have no proportion with it self; They are flesh, and that is spirit; nor thoroughly comforted with these shews, because the time is at hand, when it shall be truly said, as *Rachel* said of her Children, they are not. Give the Child that cries for the Breast what you will, and it gives not over, because this is the only thing it wants. The Soul will never be still, nor give over its muttering and complaints, till it hath the very thing that fully supplies its want; and that only is God: and they that live not under the power of this perswasion, will run after every shadow, and be ticed into mortal sin; and yet at last lose their labour and hope; and
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all this because they forget that God is their Rest, and that their Happiness is bound up in him. Jog thy self a little, and consider what it is to be God, but to have All-sufficiency? and to have all Satisfying, Ravishing Excellency, in the greatest Transcendency, without any Bounds or Ends? what it is to be God but to have all imaginable Perfection? And therefore to think we remember God, when we forget those Perfections which are his very Being, is a lie with a witness, and will prove one with a vengeance, if thou dost not pray to God, and prevail with him to have thy Memory restored, and to heal this defect thereof.

4: They forget God that live not under a daily sense of his Omniscience, and forget that his Eye pierceth the thickest darkness, and that nothing is hid from his distinct Observation: For he that denieth this, denieth God, and he that forgetteth this, forgets that, without which God cannot be God. Tell me, thou that abhorrest Atheism with thy Tongue; why art thou so notoriously guilty of it in thy practice? Why dost thou with-draw from the Eyes of Men, when thou hast some filthiness to commit which thou art ashamed they should see or know? Why dost thou shut thy self up in thy Closet, that there thou mayest hide thy Vanity and Folly, and darest not publish thy Levity, Shame, or Wickedness, unto holy and discerning Men? Nay, it may be not to Men as wicked as thy self? Such a reproach is folly, vanity, and wickedness unto any man. Yea, Why dost thou retire into thy own heart (as if thou wouldst lock all up, and make all sure) and there exercise thy self in Pride, Envy, Self-conceit, Uncleaness;

and act these sins with confidence and security, in the darkness of thy heart, which if another like thy self did but see, thou wouldst not know where to hide thy self for shame? And yet because all hath been transacted with so much silence and secrecy, thou hast no disposition to blush or be ashamed; but like the Whore in the *Prov. Thou eatest and wipest thy mouth, and say'st, What shame have I done?* And dost thou think there is no witness of thy shameful wicked acts? No Eye to take notice? Better all the World had seen thee than he that stands but for a cypher to thy deluded forgetful Heart. I might here run over all the Attributes of God, both Essential, Subsistential, and Relative, and oppress your Memory with particulars: But having given these instances, I leave the rest to your Meditations. Yet before I leave this head and proceed to the second, I shall add thus much of the Attributes of God in general.

5. They may be said to forget them all at once, that forget themselves, and live not under a sense of their *great necessities*, nor think considerately, and periwade themselves day by day, that they are poor and miserable, and blind and naked; *Rev. 3. 17.* They that are rich in their own apprehensions, and increased in Goods and have need of nothing, must needs be stout and insolent, and cannot escape this sin of Forgetfulness. *Jesurun*, that is *Israel*, waxed fat and kicked against God, *Dent. 32. 15.* and they never remembered him to the purpose, till they themselves by consideration, or God by his Judgments, did inforce a sense of their necessities on them. When he slew them, then they sought him, and they returned
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and inquired early after God. And they remembered that God was their Rock, and the high God their Redeemer, which before they forgot, *Psa. 78. 34, 35.* And yet so soon as ever they were out of streights and warmin Prosperity, and thought they had no need, they forgot God again. They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the Enemy, *ver. 42.*

That man must needs send up cold and careless Prayers to God day by day, that feels none, or but little need of God. How can he confess with a broken heart, the sins that never come near his heart, nor were a burthen to him? How can that man magnifie or seek the Grace of God every day, that doth not verily think he needs it every day? How can he worthily admire his Redeemer, who hath loved him, and washed his Soul in his Blood, that feels not his own Guilt, and doth not frequently renew loathing and abhorring thoughts of it? How can he lift up his Heart to the Father of Lights, for the Spirit of Illumination, that doth not sufficiently apprehend and bewail his own Ignorance, and the darkness of his uncertain mind? How can he rejoyce in the hopes of the Glory of God, that foolishly adores, and cheat himself with the Glory of this World? The day of Deliverance and full Redemption will never be a pleasant Meditation unto him, that feels not himself oppressed with his sins, and is as heartily weary of that Burthen, as he is of Sicknes, when it afflicts his Body. Never think to meditate on Gods Justice, with any Savour or Delight, unless you bend your thoughts to consider the mischiefs of Injustice; and how particular Families and

Nations, yea, and the whole World, are perverted and disturbed with Iniquity. Thou wilt never apply thy Heart to God for Wisdom to live well, unless thou remember thy latter end; and what hast the comforts of this World make to get away from thee. Can he live above in his thoughts with any content and satisfaction, that doth not die daily, and not often think with some seriousness that he may daily die. It's wisdom therefore to give entertainment to such thoughts. How many have shut their Eyes in a healthful Sleep, who have waked in another World? We give too large scope to our account, while we reckon seven years for a Life, when we see so many dispatch'd within the Circle and Revolution of half that time; and though we are such a blast our selves, yet our comforts are oftentimes dead and buried before us, and leave us the surviving Executors of our own misery. When God hath put all things here below into the *Bill of Mortality*, what a foolish thought is it to think that this or that shall escape, which we have set our hearts upon? and how sinful to take the Bill and write down this or that, or the other, when God hath condemned no less than all? If thou forget these things, God would be forgotten; and one or two slight thoughts of these things will never excuse from forgetfulness.

These are the first sort of Men that forget God.

2. *Secondly*, They forget God, that either forget or think but little on his *sacred and most venerable Word*, when they have it continually before them. I will not go about now to describe the woful

woful ftate and condition of that Man, that hath the Word fo much in his Eyes, yea, in his Ears, and not in his Heart, (and therefore cannot remember it in any faving degree or measure) nor torment fuch a one before his time; neither can I tell him the nature and danger of his Sin fo well as Death or Judgment will be fure to tell him. It muft needs be a ftaring, affrighting Sin, when Confcience fhall come to fee it throughly, that God hath written to us the Great things of his Law, and we have counted them as a common thing; *Hofea* 8. 12. It's in the Original רְבִי חֻרְרִי (i.) *Amplitudines*, or *Honorabilia legis*, and they counted them כְּמוֹתָם as a ftrange thing (i.) They made themfelves ftrange to them; or thefe things were ftrange to them and feldom in their Thoughts. This is a wicked requital of fuch a ftrange and wonderful Love. More particularly,

They forget the Word of God,

1. That have not a high and transcendent Reverence of the Authority thereof.

2. They that are not in any confiderable measure affected with the important matters, which it fets before them.

3. That are not awakened by any ferious thoughts of the moft certain and near accomplifhment, of all that is either threatened or promifed therein.

I fay again,

They that are not awed by its Authority, nor moved with its Importance, nor roused by its

certainty, (1.) To yield hearty Subjection unto *Christ*, (2.) To his Laws, (3.) And by a deliberate Resolution to renounce either self, or whatsoever doth oppose them, will never escape this guilt, but be numbred amongst the *Forgetters of Gods Word*. For Faith or Subjection to the Person of *Christ*, and Obedience to his Laws, and abrenunciation of all that would hinder this Subjection of our Hearts and Obedience of our Lives, are *Three great ends* for which the Word of God was ordained and appointed, and a high Reverence of its Authority, and deep Sense of its Importance, and firm perswasion of its certainty would most undoubtedly bring to pass: For it is most unquestionable, that God would not fail these his own means.

I. *First*, They must read, or hear these Instructions slightly and unworthily, that are not deeply wrought upon, by the consideration of *their Author*, and the Divinity that is instamp'd upon them. It's not enough that you believe and acknowledge this, but that you be frequently under the thought of it. And it is a weighty truth, worthy your remembrance, That the Soul is never wrought upon to any purpose, either in its Understanding, Will or Affections, but *by frequent, serious, and repeated Acts*. The main difficulty therefore in the work of Conversion, and a saving change, on our part, lies here, in bringing our thoughts to a devout and frequent meditation of these Objects, which God hath resolved shall do the work if ever it be done. And though he can change the Heart by a word and in a moment, if he please, yet he hath told us flatly he will not
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do it ordinarily, without these means: And therefore he awakens every Soul to such Meditations, whom he will shew mercy to. A Mans Thoughts are the means that God makes most use of in renewing his Heart. Do thou not presume, whoever thou art, that God will infuse *Sanctification* into thy Heart by a miracle, when thou art thinking all the day, yea, all the week long, upon meer vanity, if not doing worse. *But this by the way.* He that doth not strike his heart into superlative Reverence of this Word, by thinking often of that *Holy Spirit* by whom it was word for word inspired, will never be made fit to take it into his heart, and chew upon it when he lies down and riseth up; to curb every base Inclination of his Soul by it, and to resolve they shall bend to this Word or have no quiet. The Heart is so prone to Earth and Vanity, and the Flesh with its Affections and Lusts, are so strong and masterless, that they will never obey unless such Authority be produced. Yea, there's none that are well vers'd in their own Hearts, but will find how they will flight such Authority, and sometime venture to contemn it. But as he that doth wisely govern a Family, or other Society, much more a Kingdom, will not suffer his Authority to be trampled on, nor his Laws to stand for Ciphers, but will vindicate them with the greatest Power and Majesty that he can put on; much more will the Lord of Heaven and Earth stand up in the behalf of his own Authority, and vindicate the best Laws that ever were made from contempt. And if any sinner be so fottish as to think, that his Wit, or Pedigree, or Riches, or Esteem in the World, will bear him

out in such irreverence, let me say to such a one as once *Samuel* said to *Saul*, 1 *Sam.* 15. 16. Stay and I will tell thee what the Lord hath said of such a one. *Them that honour me I will honour, and they that despise me shall lightly be esteemed;* 1 *Sam.* 2. 30. Be as wise and as great as thou wilt, the Lord will shame thee sooner or later, and kick thee down into Scorn and Disgrace.

2. *Secondly*, They are forgetful of the Word of God, that are not considerably moved with the most important matters which it sets before them. If thou readest it not frequently, thou forgettest it in the grossest sense, and thine own Conscience will fall upon and condemn thee. And if thou dost read it, yet if thy very Heart be not affected with those matters in the Word, which more concern thee than all the World, so as to shew it in thy Life, I would not for all the World hear that Judgment that thou shalt shortly hear. Doth it so much concern thee what thou shalt Eat, and what thou shalt Drink, and wherewithal thou shalt be cloathed, and how thou shalt Sleep, or enjoy thy Health, much more how thou shalt visit this or that Friend, do this or that petty business, as how thou shalt save thy Soul? how thou mayst get thy Heart affected with its Sin and Misery, and set a value upon Christ as he deserveth? (this is not easily done;) how thou mayst break off thine Affections from these things that will abuse them, and certainly blast every good work in thy Heart, and turn thy Religion into meer Hypocrisie? For it is impossible that the Love of God should be in that Heart, where the love of any worldly thing doth prevail. Harken therefore and listen

listen attentively, what necessity the Word of God layeth upon Self-denial & mortification of the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts. *He that will be my Disciple must deny himself, take up his Cross and follow me ; Luke 9. 23. And if ye live after the Flesh ye shall die ; Rom. 8. 13.* If thine Estate, Life, or Credit, only were here concerned, thy neglect would not prove thee so perfectly mad and distracted as now it doth, when the Eternal Life and Welfare of thy Soul is so much concerned.

3. *Thirdly*, They that live not under any serious thoughts of the certain accomplishment of all that is threatned, or promised in the Word, cannot but forget the Word. The things that are contained in the Scripture, if they were liable to some doubt, yet were worthy to be thought on, because they concern so much, if they should prove true. And this is an Argument that will stop their Mouths, that chuse a Romance or vain Ballad, before the Word of God, to be the matters of their thoughts. But when God will certainly make good every Judgment he hath threatned to the impenitent sinner; and when every wicked person that dies in his sin, shall as certainly feel those dreadful Woes, as now he hears or may hear them pronounced; O what an advantage is here, to beget a Resolution to withstand every Temptation that would draw us to those things that are thus threatned? Though it were a pleasing and profitable Lust, it's stark madness to fulfil it. O if we had seen or felt the wrath of God in another World, it would be Armour of Proof against all wilful presumptuous sin, for ever afterwards;

wards; and would awaken the Soul to any pains or diligence to escape it: And is it not as certain as if we had seen or felt it? Hath the Lord said that he will laugh at the destruction of a sinner, and mock when his fear cometh? *Prov. 1. 26.* Hath he said, that he will shortly come with his Fan in his hand, and thorowly purge his Floor, and gather his Wheat into the Garner, but that he will burn up the Chaff with unquenchable Fire; and will this not surely be brought to pass? *Mat. 3. 12.* Heaven and Earth may sooner pass away, than one jot or tittle of his Word shall pass, *Mat. 5. 16.* Things that will certainly come to pass, if they concern us in this life only; though they be not near, yet they are not slighted by us: But if they are near and certain, and highly concerning, the thoughts thereof will rush in upon us, and prevail against the greatest necessity of nature; they will disturb our Rest, and make us forget to eat our Bread.

Could a Man that were to be tryed for his Life to morrow, or a day or two hence, eat his Meat quietly, or lie down upon his Bed in peace, and take his Rest? *Psal. 4. 8.* And canst thou read the Threats or Promises in the Word of God, that concern thee so unspeakably, and may be made good within one day or hour, for all thou knowest, and yet be no more overwhelmed with Joy or Terror? They that are not awakened with the serious affecting thoughts of the most certain and near accomplishment of all that is threatned or promised in the Word of God, will certainly be condemned in the number of those that do forget it.

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These are the second sort of *those that forget God.*

Those that think not upon his sacred, venerable Word.

3. *Thirdly*, They forget God indeed, that overlook his most observable Works, and regard not his remarkable Providences. The Works of the Lord are great, both of Creation and Providence, sought out of all them that have pleasure in them; *Psal.* 3. 2. And those that have no pleasure in them will be sure to forget them.

There be several ways by which the Works and Providence of God is overlooked, or several persons guilty of this sin.

1. *First*, They are signally guilty, that deny Gods Providence in the Rule and Dispose of all Affairs, either directly or by plain consequence. There are none that deny it in the first sense (that is) directly and expressly, but plain Atheists, of which I would there were none in this Nation, that believe in their Hearts that all things come to pass by *Fate* or *Chance*. But they deny *Providence* by *Consequence* and *Interpretation*, that are so intent upon Means and Instruments, whereby any effect is brought to pass, or rather upon the Effect it self, that they do not at all look up any higher; *Psal.* 10. 4. The Wicked throw the Pride of his Countenance will not seek after God; God is not in all his thoughts; thy Judgments are far above out of his sight.

These lie under a deep guilt of this sin.

2. *Secondly*, They are guilty of this Wickedness

ness also, that can find out nothing among all the works of Creation and Providence, so worthy their Observation, as to captivate their Souls to the *highest Reverence* of their Author: Highest I mean, not in respect of the degrees of Reverence, but of the kinds; that is, though he hath a Reverence for this Object, and another for that, another for a third; yet he hath *Highest* and most principal veneration for him who doth so incomparably manage all things. And who hath impudence enough to plead for that man that hath an understanding and considering Faculty, and such Wonders to behold both in Heaven and Earth, such Providences towards the World in general, and such towards the Church in special, and yer God no higher in his Judgment and Affections, in his Thoughts and Heart, than a full Chest, and a little painted Skin, and an adored Lust? What, hast thou heard the Voice of the Lord so often in Thunder and Lightning, and seen the dreadful effects of them? Hast thou not heard of a little of his Breath shut up in the caverns of the Earth, that hath made this stable Body of the Earth to shake and tremble, and rent and torn the very bowels thereof, and overturned whole Cities at once? Hast thou heard of the Division of *Jordan* and the *Red Sea*, how the Waters parted and left a path-way in the midst of them, whilst the People passed over, of whom God had taken on him the Care and Conduct? And how *Pharaoh* and his mighty Host were afterwards overwhelmed by the same Waters, who were their professed Enemies? Hast thou read and believed what he did for *Hezekiah*, when the proud King

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of *Affyria* threatned to swallow him up? How he accepted his Tears, heard his Prayers, and an Army of Two hundred thousand men almost all struck dead in one night? What he did for wicked *Manasseh*, though he had filled *Jerusalem* with Idols and Blood; yet how mercifully he heard him when he cryed to him in Chains? Look into the sacred History, or read over any profane History, or consult thine own Eyes and Ears, what thou hast seen or heard; what he hath done to and for his Enemies, and what he hath done for his Church, or any parts or members of it; and if thou canst be a *Sot* or *Block* under all, and have Mens Persons in admiration, because of advantage to thee, *Jude* 16. rather than reverence and adore the Lord and mighty Worker of all, take that thine is, and go thy way, thou art one that does overlook the Works of God.

3. *Thirdly*, They overlook the Works and Providence of God, whose lives are ordered in a course of crossness and contradiction to them. As History reports of *Sardanapalus*, that he lay in Bed all day and rose at night, when others went to Bed; *rose* and so turned the day into night and the night into day. So when God calleth by his Providence, I mean by some formidable signs of his displeasure to Fasting and Weeping and Mourning, and to girding with Sack-cloth, and Baldness; and behold Joy and Gladness, slaying Oxen and killing Sheep, eating Flesh and drinking Wine; *Esay* 22. 12, 13. that will not see when the hand of God is lifted up, 26. 11. When God is putting up and throwing down, and disgracing all worldly Pride, They are seeking great things for themselves,

selves , and feeding themselves with proud thoughts of what they have , or what they hope to have ; *Jer.* 45. 4, 5. When God is pulling down the proud , they are delighting themselves in Pride , and Oppression of those that cannot defend themselves. When God is searching for Sin , they are hiding of it ; and when he is shewing his dislike of it , and would stop the poison that it should spread no further ; it's sweet in their Mouths , they hide it under their Tongue , they spare it and forsake it not ; *Job* 20. 12, 13. What a proud contempt of his Providence is it to sit still and shut our Eyes , and not consider them ? *Psal.* 111. 4. He hath made his wonderful works to be remembred. But what a Pride is that , that when God is debasing Men we will exalt them ; when God is visiting Sin and Transgression , they are encouraging it in themselves or others , and will not be searched ; but instead of starving their Lusts and Corruptions , are making Provision for them ? When God is telling Men plainly of their Sabbath-breaking ; careless performance of his Service and Worship , Selfishness , Inordinate love of , and Adulterous Affections to any Creature ; and hiding Pride from Man , and turning our Eyes from a fond Admiration of Creatures , and laying them in the dust ; They will not endure it , but fret and murmur in their hearts ; and are ready to say as the Rebellious Followers of *Korah* did to *Moses* , Wilt thou put out these Eyes of ours ? We will not come down ; we will not deny our selves , nor be crossed in our wills , nor leave our shame. When God is putting the Bridle into their Mouths , and laying a Curb

Curb and Restraint upon their Intemperance, Pride and Luxury, and bringing into contempt their Gallantry and swaggering Bravery; they will not endure the Curb, but rage and foam and grow mad, and bite the Bridle that holds them in; and reply as the remnant *Jews* did after the Captivity, when they sent *Jeremiah* to inquire of the Lord for their Direction, and liked not the Answer that he brought, *Jer. 44. 16, 17.* We will not hearken to thee, but will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth of our own Mouth; we will let ^{our} Hearts with a full rein to any thing they desire; for when we have done thus we were well and saw no evil; when we leave off to shew favour and courtesie to our selves, who shall befriend us? when we begin to cry shame on our selves, all men will cry shame on us; and if once we come down and lie in the dust, all men will trample upon us. Those are some of the shifts that carnal Wisdom and Reason alledgeth, whereby it would frustrate the Invitations of Mercy. When God is calling for the Plumb Line, and meting out a Nation for Destruction, *Amos 7. 7.* when he is drawing the lines of confusion in a place, *1 Sam. 2. 8.* and marking it for Judgment, they cry as the Inhabitants of *Ephraim* once did, The Bricks are fallen down, but we will build with hewen Stones; the Sycamores are cut down, but we will change them into Cedars, *Esay 9. 10.*

And though we may not be gotten up to such a degree of wickedness as this is, it will concern us to make search and inquiry, whether there be no seed of this wicked nature in us. I am too much out of doubt, that there is much of crossness and
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—contradiction to the will of God in the best heart ; and too loth are the best to veil and sloop to the will of God, when it crosseth ours ; but it will be fitter to help on this search in the Application.

4. Lastly, They overlook both *his Attributes, Word and Works*, all at once, that put him off with shadows instead of substance ; that give him a few flattering words and shews for the inward worship and purity of their hearts. This is the very instance of the *Psalm*, a part of which we have now before us. What an affront is this, to remember him with the Mouth, that he may be cast out of the Heart, where he will have more to do than all the World, or else abhor that person and his service, whose heart it is? To wash the outside with the paint of an external profession, and to have a Heart full of Pride and unmortified Lusts, full of putrid noisom Filth, is not to play the *Christian* but the *Pharisee*. To profess God at Home and at Church, in our Houses, and his House, and to joyn with his Servants in the Externals of his Worship ; to read his Word and sing his Praises with our Lips, and in Heart and Life to subvert the Christian Faith, is not to be a Disciple but a *Judas*. To give God the most glorious Attributes and Titles, and call him thy Creator, Lord and Governour, and to acknowledge thou hast all from his Bounty, and yet to deny him the Service and Obedience due to his Laws ; this is not to *remember* but to *forget him*. *If I be a Father, where is mine Honour ? If I be a Master, where is my fear ?* saith God, *Mal.* 1. 6. Is not the Lord a Spirit, and will he be put off with a meer bodily service only? I know he will have
Tongue

the service of the body also; he will have the Tongue and the Knee, and an External Reverence, that may be of good Example to others. But thou art guilty of Hypocrisie and Folly both; if this be all that thou canst spare, if thou go not further, thou mayst be a very devil in thy heart; ~~when thou hast Oyl and Butter in thy Mouth,~~ and when thou speakest the smoothest words to God, thou mayst have war and enmity to him in thy heart; thou mayst fetch a sigh or a groan for sin at a pretty easie rate; but God will not take this instead of Self-denial and mortification of thy Lusts, but will abhor their shews and complements, that cover hatred with lying Lips. When God calls to the proud Person to come down and sit in the dust and humble himself, will it be an acceptable service if he would offer him something else? or will he take the fruit of the Body for the sin of the Soul, *Mich. 6. 7.* I mean a shew of humility; in going softly, speaking faintly, looking sadly, instead of true lowliness and poverty of Spirit; I speak not against the outward signs, they are good, when accompanied with the thing signified; but when we deceive our selves with these; and think to deceive God also. True humility consists in a universal submission to the Will of God, and ready obedience to all his Laws, when they cross our interest in the world, as when they do promote it. And he that hath not this in a prevailing measure and degree, God will look upon him afar off, let him come as near as he will with his Tongue or Knee, *Psal. 138. 6.* and he will plentifully reward ^{him} as a proud doer, *Psal. 40. 4. 31. 23.* When God cal-

leth to search our hearts and try our ways, and *remember* our doings. It will not serve turn to remember the doings of others, and to search and censure them, to lay heavy burdens upon the City or Countrey, and not to touch them with one of our Fingers; not but we may and must confesse the sins of the whole Nation, when Gods hand is upon a whole Nation and calls it to repentance; but if we remember not our own sins with a weeping heavy heart also, and do not loath our selves for all our own abominations, *Ezek. 36. 31.* and feelingly confesse with shame and detestation, the sins that lie nearest our hearts, and take it for a mercy to have the *scourge of a just and smarting rod*, as well as the *charge of a holy convincing word*, that we have not *only threatning* (which we have made a shift to slight so often) but *some execution* to make sin odious to us, and to recover us to a due sense and apprehension of it. If we have brought our selves to such a death in sin, that we cannot understand what it is until *we feel it*; it's a mercy to *feel* that we may *understand*: But let us remember, that if feeling do not recover our understanding, God will forsake us as a desperate cure, and say, why should they be stricken any more, they will revolt more and more? *Esay 1. 5.* When once it comes to that, *farewel Rod*, it will come to that *farewel God* for ever; and then forgetfulness will be our punishment, as now it is our sin.

To conclude therefore with some little touch of *Application*, though it be out of its due place, *since the day of the Lord* is come upon us, and he is visiting for our Transgressions, and we have so
 loud

loud a call to Repentance. Let us not think though we have mercifully escaped the Judgment that we may escape the Duty also. It deserves a double acknowledgment if God do awaken us by the doleful noise of others complaints; and if he do cleanse our Hearts by the Judgments that sweep so many away; but let us see that it be a true and substantial sorrow, that begins at the right place, even at the very heart, and will not evaporate and spend its self in a few tears and sighs, but doth mortifie our sin, and work a sincere renovation in our life. And if we do take upon us also to lament the sins of the City and Nation, let us prove our sorrow to be of the right stamp; by helping forward their Repentance and Reformation, first by our Prayers, then by other our best endeavours.

'Tis a poor matter to forbear a meal or twain, and yet to harbour such a Guest as pulls the meat from our Mouths, and calls for the Pillow under our Heads, and snatches away the desire of our Eyes, and divorces our Friends and Companions from us; yea, which is the sum and abridgement of all our misery, parts between God and us. 'Tis a poor business to spread Sack-cloth over us, (I mean to deny our Bodies their usual Ornaments) and to strew Ashes under our Feet, and to let a few tears drop from us for sin, and yet to carry in our Breasts an Heart unrent, unbroken, unsoftened by a true sence of sin and a work of Grace. To what purpose is it to bow the Body to God, and yet to make ones Heart like an Iron Sinew, too stiff and stout to bend in obedience to Gods Command. The Prophet *Hosea* lays it up-

on them as a heavy charge, *Hof. 7. 14.* They have not cryed unto me with their Hearts when they howled upon their Beds. And you know with what indignation God puts the question, *Esay lviii. 5.* *Is this the Fast that I have chosen? a day for a man to afflict his Soul? Is it to bow down his Head as a Bull-rush, and to spread Sackcloth and Ashes under him? Wilt thou call this a Fast and an acceptable day to the Lord?* But oh what a Fast is that, when we will not go thus far, when we will not afflict ourselves so far, as to want our Food and Ornaments. I am confident it is a great provocation when we will not shew forth to one another these and the like outward signs of humiliation. *Ahab* went thus far, and the stubborn *Jews* never stuck at this. And though the same signs of mourning and humiliation be not in fashion with us that were with them, yet I am sure gaudery is no sign external of inward humiliation. If I had time, or were indeed upon the Application, it would be seasonable to help forward the true Repentance that God expecteth from us. By setting some of our sins before our face in some of their aggravations; but that I may have opportunity to do hereafter.

So much in answer to the *Second Question*, who they are that forget God.

I come now to the Application.

1. *First*, Then we may hence discover, by what hath been spoken in answer to the *Two foregoing Questions*, What a *sin* it is to *forget God*; and by *Connexion*, how *Guilty* they make themselves that wipe God out of their *Remembrance*, and reserve their hearts for other things.

If to *forget God* be not barely to cast him out of thy memory (which yet were sinful enough) since all thy *faculties* are indebted to him) but to throw him out of thy *Heart* and *Affections*, as the case is plain enough that it is. If to *forget God*, imply a disregard of his most glorious *Attributes*, *Word* and *Works*, to which such a high *Veneration* and *Reverence* is due from every *understanding Creature*: Then what a *Sin* art thou *Guilty* of, *That dost not remember him*? Wilt thou *Annihilate* (as much as in thee lies) the *Sun* that shineth, the *Air* that thou suckest in, the *Heavens* that hang over thy head, and the *Earth* under thy feet, and all the *Glory* both of *Heaven* and *Earth*? wilt thou make nothing of the *light* of thy *Eyes*, and the *breath* of thy *Nostrils*? If thou *forget God*, thou dost upon the matter annihilate all these as to the *end* and *intent* of them; as to their *moral* use, though not as to their *Physical nature*. Darest thou be *guilty* of the contempt of that *mighty power* that made thee and all the *World* out of *Nothing*? of the highest *Sovereignty* and *Jurisdiction*, to which every rational *Creature* owes *subjection*; there's one only *Law giver* that's able to *save* or to *destroy*, and darest thou condemn him?

James 4. 12. Art thou mad to despise the *Royal Law*, James 2. 8, the *Law of Heaven*, and the *highest Wisdom* that hath composed it, and the *highest Authority* that hath imposed it. Art thou so void of *Reason* as to contemn thine own *happiness*, and to despise thine own *welfare*? And to slight that *Eye* that always seeth thee? In a word, Art thou so *bold* to affront *infinite* and *inflexible Justice*, *Purity* and *Holiness*? If *God* be forgotten by thee, yea, if he have not the *chiefest Room* in thy *Remembrance*, thou wilt be judged *one day* to be *guilty* of such contempt.

What a *sin* must it needs be, to despise the *written Word of God*, indited by such a *Spirit*, confirmed by such *Miracles* and mighty *Works*, given us in so much *love* and *mercy*; that contains such *important matters* of the biggest concernment, whose *accomplishment* is so near and certain? and to slight what the *God of Heaven* hath there either *threatned* or *promised*? And if *God* be forgotten by thee, thou wilt fall under this *damnable guilt*.

Art thou so stupid as to overlook and despise the *Works of God*, whether of *Creation*, *Providence*, or *Redemption*, and to *forget God*, whilst thou hast such helps for thy memory? Darest thou cross the *Acts of Gods Providence*, and say thou wouldst have it thus when *God* would have it otherwise: This thou wilt do if thou hast a *Temptation*, if *God* be forgotten. In a word, this will *betray* thee to that *Formality* and *Hypocrisie* in his *Service*, and to such a carnal *Worship* of him, that hath so little likeness to him, or acceptance from him, which he doth so much detest; And which he doth so *bitterly upbraid* the *confident, impudent Jews*, which in this whole 50 *Psalms*. I

I know the *best* have too much of this *sin*, and forget their endeared *Lord* too much, not only in the *works* of their *civil* and *common* *Employment*, but also in their acts of *Worship* and *immediate Service* of him, and have not *adoring*, *praising* thoughts *such* of his *Greatness* and *Goodness*, as they should have; and this is some degree of *forgetfulness*, and therefore they will be ready to *condemn themselves*, and take some share in this *Reproof*; but the *sharpest* part of the *Reproof* belongs most to them that are least disposed to take it, and most ready to *quarrel* with and *fight against* it. And this is the most *doleful aggravation* of their *misery*. O what a *misery* is it to need a *bitter Cup*, a *smarting Rod*, *sharp* and *cutting reproof*, and yet not to endure the *remedy* and the *proper means* of their *recovery*! to be desperately *sick* and not to abide the *Physician*. This is the condition of those that have most of *Guilt*, and therefore the *sorer* they are, the less they care to be *search'd* and *dress'd*.

If it be any dangerous *Distemper* in the *Body*, it's sad when the case is thus; but if the *Wound* be *Spiritual*, and the *Soul* be the *subject* to be handled and will not abide it; the condition of that *Man* or *Woman* is much more to be lamented.

O how sad is their *case* that need *Humiliation* and *Repentance*, and the sense of their *sins* and *misery*, that make them so *forgetful* of *God*, and yet are *impatient* of the *means* that the *Wisdom* of *God* hath appointed, and that they must use to bring this to pass! O what a *fearful state* is it, and *deeply* to be *lamented*, to have the greatest *necessities* on them, accompanied with the greatest *stupidity* and *insensibility*.

To have need to cry aloud for *mercy, mercy*, and a *heart* fit to receive it, and yet to have no mind to lift up an earnest Prayer unto God, and to stir up the remembrance of him, nor to be awakened thereto by any way that's like to speed! How dreadful is the condition of a *senseless, hard hearted sinner*! that must *die Eternally* without *Repentance*, and be *broken* by the *vengeance* of God for ever, if his *heart* do not *break* now; and yet doth consent, yea, and set this *Seal* to his own *Destruction*, and yet doth reject all the *humbling, softning means*, that *Christ* the greatest friend that ever he had, or shall have in the *World*, hath taught him and beseeched him to use: say not that a man may *forget God*, and yet need no such *reproof*, nor be in any such *danger*. I have told you what *forgetfulness of God* implies, and who they are that are chargeable therewith, and who can easily speak worse of any; unless it be those that have more of this *sin*, and are *guilty* of it in a higher *degree*. Those that the *Text* speaks to, are such as God threatens to tear in *pieces*, unless they be *recovered* by *consideration*. And the *Scripture* doth not use to speak with so much *heat* and *indignation*, where the *sin* is not so *provoking*. I come therefore now to shew you,

1. The *guiltiness*
 2. The *danger* of
- } this *sin*.

And what a *madness* as well as *wickedness* it is to *forget God*; that if it be possible, this double sight of the *sin* and *danger*, may the better prepare them
for

for the *means* that must *recover* them and bring them to speedy use of them.

And this will appear { 1. From the hainous *nature* of this *sin*.
2. From the fearful *effects* thereof.

The odious *nature* of this *sin* is manifest, in that this forgetfulness of God is a *sin* against the highest Obligations.

1. On Gods }
2. On Our } part.

1. On Gods part.

1. *First*, In that he hath given us our *Facul-*
ties on purpose to *remember* him, and hath fitted
them for this very *use* and *service*. And what a *sin*
must it needs be to frustrate so great a *design* of
God in the very *Make* and *Fabrick* of the best of
his *Creatures* here on *Earth*. This end and use is
legible enough in his *uppermost Faculties*, which
the rest were made to *serve* and *obey*: For if all
were made to *minister* unto one, and that on
purpose to do *Homage* unto God; then all are
made *ultimately* for God; but that he had his no-
blest *Perfections* for this very end, it's casie to see
with half an *Eye*. What should he do with an
Immortal Soul, indued with the powers of *Reason*
and *free Choice*? But that by the one he might
discern the *greatest Good*, and by the other make
it

it his *Choice*. There are certain *Relations*, that intercede between all *Creatures*, amongst which, those of *Cause* and *Effect*, *Means* and *End*, are the most principal; which the *understanding* of *Man* was given him intentionally to argue and find out, that by these he might step up to the *highest Cause*, and the *supream and last end*; and do the *highest acts* of *Homage* and *Reverence* to them, that his *understanding* and *will* are able to give, in *appretiation* and *love*, which are their two most *essential Acts*. Not a *Creature* but would lead the *Reason* of *Man* to the *Creator* of all things, if he will use his *Reason* and follow this *Guide*. The most contemptible thing had a *Father* that begot it (that I may use *Job's* expression, *Job* 38. 28, &c. *Hath the Rain a Father? or who begot the drops of the Dew?*) Every thing hath a *cause* that brought it into *being*, and that was produced by a *former*, and that by something that was before that, till you come to the foremost and highest *cause*. And so for the other *Relation* of *Means* and *End*; there's nothing but is subservient to some *end*, and that to a *higher*, till you come to the *highest* (e.g.) The *Showres* moisten and supple the *Earth*, and make it bring forth *Grass*: This *Grass* is to serve a higher *end* (*viz.*) to feed and nourish the *Beasts*, that they might be fit for the *use* and *service* of *Man* his *Food*, and other *employments*, either *serious* or *recreative*: And can we think that here's a full *stop*, and *man* was made for no higher *end*, but to domineer over the other *Creatures*, and take a vay their *lives* when it pleaseth him for his *uses*? Certainly there was a further and higher *end*, that

God

God intended *Man* for, and that is to have him in perpetual *Remembrance*. It's certain there's no *Creature* here on *Earth* but *Man*, hath any *capacity* to know *God*, or to bear his *Image* in *Holiness*, or to *worship* him, which two *last* imply the *first* (1.) A *knowledge* of him. 1. What he is in himself in some measure. 2. What he is to them, Their *Creator*, *Preserver*, and *bountiful Provider*. Neither hath any of them a *Faculty* to express and utter thus much to another *Creature*, being all *deprived* of *Speech* and *Eloquution*, which is mans *Glory* only.

Obj. And if you object the 19 *Psalm*. 1. *The Heavens declare the Glory of God, and the Firmament, &c.* and therefore not man only.

Ans. The *Declaration* there spoken of is *improper* and *objective*. As a *Dial* tells what a *Clock* 'tis (1.) You may gather what time of day 'tis if you look on it, by the help of our *Reason*, not any *Tongue* it hath to express thus much. Neither hath any *Creature* an *explicit*¹ desire of an *Eternal Happiness*, that shall never fail or be interrupted. And *Lactantius*, one of the *Latin Fathers*, that liv'd in the ~~late~~^{second} *Century*, places the *Characteristical Difference* and *Specificial Distinction*, between *Man* and *Beast*, not in *Rationality*, but in *Religion*; because some *Creatures* seem to do *Acts* that are *Rational*, as the *Elephant*, *Hare*, *Fox*, *Dog*; but none that have any appearance of *Religion* or *Piety*. explicit

Now it is a very great *truth*, That *God* never made any *Power* or *Capacity* in any *Creature* in *vain*; He hath given the *Sun* an *Active Capacity* to revive and exhilarate the *lower World*, and it were second
unnatural

unnatural if he should not put forth that vertue to that end. He hath given *Earthly-Creatures* a *passive Capacity*, or *Receptive Power*, to suck in this influence; and they do and are covered over with *Corn*, and *laugh* and *sing*, *Psal.* 65. 13. And it's universally true, wheresoever there is a power that can put forth any *Act*, that should not act according to ^{that} ~~the~~ *Power*, were a *Monster* and not a *Creature*. God hath given the *Fire* a power to *burn* and *consume*, when fit matter is offered, and if it should spare the *Wood* that's laid on it, we should not count it a *merciful* but a *monstrous act*. God hath made the *Water* to *wet* and *moisten*, and if it should not do so, what were it good for? You would not commend this *Property* in *Horse* or *Beast* if they should *fly* in the *Air*, or *dive* under *Water*; the *Fish* that should shun the *Water*, would be a *monstrous* and *degenerate Breed*. And is it not as absurd and *monstrous* for a *man*, that hath a *Faculty* on purpose to *remember God*, yet to *forget* him? To have a *Capacity* to be like *God*, and yet not to *employ* and *exercise* it; for this also is *imp'y'd* in our *remembrance* of him. There were no sadder *Spectacle* in the *World* than *Man*, were it not for these *Acts*, and what is or will be *consequent* on them. A *Toad* were not half so bad, nor the most hated *Creature*, no, nor those that are continually hunted and pursued, and live always in danger of the *snare*, or some crafty *device*, or other, that may make them a *prey* to their cruel *pursuers*. These brutish *Creatures* apprehend not the *snare* till they are caught in it, nor fore-see a *mischief* till it is upon them, nor vex themselves with the *memory* of what is past. But *Reason*,
which

which is *Mans* proper *Utensil* (were it not for the *service* that it may do to *God* and his *Soul*) make him but the more capable *subject* of *Misery* and *Torment*. It helps him to prevent a *mischief* before it comes, and to think on it after it's past and gone, and to enjoy a *calamity* (I may say) and to chew upon an *evil* that's swallowed down and past. Alas! alas! If *God* gave not *Man* these *Faculties* to *remember* and *aspire* to him, it would be far more desirable to be a *Beast* than a *Man*; since then it's past all doubt, that *God* hath made *Man* for himself, and given him such a high *Capacity* on purpose to *remember* him; it's monstrous and *unnatural* to forget him.

2. Secondly, And as he hath given him his *Faculties* on purpose to *remember* him, so he hath displayed himself in the Firmament of *Heaven*, as purposely to be *remembered*, *Psal.* 111. 4. He hath made his wonderful works to be *remembered*.

And (1.) That *God* may be *remembered* by them, that's the very end of them. And verse 2. The works ^{of the Lord} are great and magnificent, sought out of all (as we render it) but in the Original it's ~~open~~ that is, *exposed* and laid open before all to take notice of; And the *Italian* Translation renders it,

as it were wickedness in a man upon whom *God* hath bestowed *Eyes*, to shut them perpetually, and to refuse to make any use of so noble a *Faculty*, So it is a wickedness much of the same kind, when *God* hath set so many visible *Objects* before this *Faculty*, to put him in mind of him that hath made both *Faculty* and *Object*, and he makes no such use of them; he hath *Eyes* and sees not, he hath *Objects* and doth not understand them. Judge what

what a *wicked perverseness* this is. We are prone to think it no great *wickedness* to commit such a *sin* as this is, and to cross the very end of making our selves and other things, whilst we do it not purposely, and have no thought of *contradiction* to God in this *sin*. But let us not deceive our selves, when we have so high an *obligation* upon us to any *Duty* and are commanded to *remember* and *think* upon it, and we do not; though we do not purposely *forget*, because God bids us to *remember*, yet we are *morally* and *reputatively* guilty of thwarting and *crossing* the *Will* of God, though not in quite so high a *degree*, yet enough to *undo* us *everlastingly*, unless we repent of what's past, and do otherwise for the time to come. This will be but a *pitiful, shameful answer*, when God shall come to examine *man by man*, what *proficiency* we have made, amongst the *Creatures* that were made to *instruct* us, and shall find a *dunce* instead of a knowing well informed *Scholar*. Do the *Heavens* declare the *Glory* of God to the *Moles*, that want outward *Eyes* (as it is usually said) or to the *Brutes* that want the *inward Eye* (that is *understanding*) or to Man that is *instructed* with both these helps; and will it be a *venial sin* (think ye) to wink with *both* these? He that by all the *Glory* of *Heaven* and *Earth* is not so far enlightened, so as to *adore* the *wonderful Perfection* of him that made them, and to *prostrate* his very *heart* in *love* and *reverence* to him, is wilfully blind, and one that shall be dealt with as it he shut his *Eyes* against all. What is there no *Workmanship* either in *Heaven* above, or *Earth* beneath, or *Water* under the *Earth*? Is there nothing in the

the *Air*, or bowels of the *Earth*, that's worth thine *Observation*, or that can erect our *blockish Heart*, and bring up our *Affections* to the glorious *Artificer* and *Workman*!

It's a profound *Sleep* indeed into which that man is fallen, and is a certain forerunner of *Death*, when none of all these *excellent Creatures*, that strike his sense, can *awaken* him to any *understanding*, *reverence*, or *love* of his *Excellency*, that hath bid all things come forth and stand in their several ranks, and even *gird* themselves to the *service* of *man*

This *sin* hath the higher *aggravation*, in that there be so many various ways, whereby the several *Creatures* would recover *man* to a due *remembrance* of *God*. I might insist upon those four ways mentioned in the 2 *Tim.* 3. 16. and shew how by *Doctrine* *Reproof*, *Correction* and *Instruction* in *Righteousness*, all the visible *Creatures* would help on this *Remembrance* of *God*, and therefore forgetfulness of *God* hath the greater *sin*, by how much it prevails against the greater *means*, vouchsafed by *God* for its *cure*: But least that way should not seem so *intelligible* and *convincing*, I shall chuse rather to nominate *four other ways*, whereby the several *Creatures* do provoke *man* to have *God* *highest* in their *Remembrance*.

1. They all offer themselves to his *sight*, and by that to his *understanding*, to inform him in the glorious *Perfections* of *God*, which they palpably *discover*, and therefore are very serviceable in the work of *Contemplation*. No one so sottish as to imagine they could make themselves, then they must be made by another; that's *God*, but such
infinite

infinite variety, and such rare and *excellent works*, must suppose; and therefore put any one that thinks on them in mind of *infinite Wisdom* and *Skill*, *infinite Goodness* and *Power* in the creating of them. 2. They serve for his *Food* and *Raiment*, and are the means to keep him *alive*, that could not live a day without them. Let him that thinks he is least of all beholding to the *Creatures*, consider whether he could *live* an *hour* without the *Air* he *sucks* in; or how many days he could *live* without *Food*, which one *Creature* or another serves in *every day*, and then let him think who hath *made* and doth supply *every Creature* to him, and *forget God* if he can. 3. They serve for his other *necessary uses*, in great delightful *variety*: The *Horse* to *fetch* in and *carry* out both himself and other things, and to remove his *Luggage* from place to place. The *Wood* and *Stones* to *build* his *Habitation*, and the *Art* and *Workmanship* of *Man* to *adorn* it, the *Dog* to keep it; and all things conspire together to make him as *happy* as he can be in the absence of *God*; even a *Lord* on *Earth*, because *God* hath appointed him so to be; and hath he not yet enough to advance his *great Benefactor* in his *Heart*? 4. They serve also for his *Recreation*, and sober *Pleasure* and *Refreshment*, when he hath been tired by his more serious *Employments*; and yet to *forget God*, whose *Praise* and *Service* these *Creatures* do so *constantly bespeak*, by their so beneficial *service* to us. All these steps lead up the *sin* to a *higher guilt*. In a word, to have all the *Senses* assaulted by the several *Objects*, that *God* hath furnished to them. The *Eye* to be fed with so many *delightful sights* of
 of

of several things. The *Ear* with such various *Harmony* and *Sound*. The *Taste* with so many distinct and grateful *Relishes*, of things which the *wisdom* of the *Creator* hath provided and offered to that *Sense*. And the *Objects* of the other *Senses* are multiplied to as great a variety: And is it not monstrous for the mind of man to have so many *Monitors*, and yet to forget *God* in *despight* of all.

3. *Thirdly*, He hath moreover given us his *Son*, that we might not want an *Argument* of the greatest force to *provoke* a *remembrance* of him. When we were like to withstand all other *Arguments*, and to lose the *sense* of all his other *mercies* towards us, and to *perish* in a wicked *oblivion* and *forgetfulness* of *God* for ever, He hath taken such a *course*, that one would think should *create* a *memory* of him where there was none at all of him before; and should *recover* those that are the most desperately gone in *forgetfulness*, and force them to say, that the *love* of *Christ* constraineth them, 2 *Cor.* 5. 14. Would not a *Malefactor* that's sentenced and condemned to die, take it for a favour indeed, and place that man high in his *Remembrance*, that should step between him and *death*, and release him with the loss of his own *life*, especially if he were a *Person of Honour and Degree*? And doth it not deserve a *Remembrance* not a *Customary*, but a *substantial Remembrance*, when the *highest* and most *honourable Person* that ever lived in the *World*, hath laid down his *life* in the room of ours? Sure we think we are not so beholding to him as we are, when such an *obligation* as this will prevail no more to *exalt God* in our *Hearts*. If this

be not an *obligation* that doth inforce a *gracious Remembrance* now ; I am sure it is such a one that will *enforce* a *tormenting Remembrance* hereafter. When the thought of such a mercy so wickedly slighted, shall be a *raging fire* in their *Bowels*, and then they shall not be able to forget it. What's the matter that such a *motive* is put off and not regarded by too many ? I am sure there's nothing but flat *downright wickedness*, can make a man so *sleepy* and *forgetful*. If such a *Breath* as this will not kindle the *love of God* in our *Hearts*, if such a *spur* will not *prick us forward* to the duty of *Remembrance*. It's not because we want *Arguments*, but because we want *Grace*, and how we should want *Grace* if we were apprehensive of the mercy, would be very difficult to *resolve* ; and how we should not be apprehensive, if we did but think frequently of it, would be as impossible to determine ; So that you see the wickedness of this *sin* is *ultimately* resolved into not thinking or bending our *selves* to think what we have received. Well we are left to take our *choice* ; the *death of Christ* will either oblige us to the duty of *Remembrance*, or aggravate the *sin* of *forgetfulness*.

Lastly, We have the *Spirit*, *Word*, and all the *Ordinances of God* to beget and cherish this *Remembrance of God*. I joyn all these together, because I would not multiply particulars too much.

Obj. But you may say, Though the *Death of Christ* and the *Gift of the Spirit*, are *Arguments* of great strength, and may do good service to quicken up a *Believer*, that's backward to this work ; yet how can they compel a *wicked man*, or one that *forgets God*, since *Christ* died for none but the *E-*
lect,

lest, and none can know themselves to be such, but such as have *true Faith*, and know they have it; and so also for the *Spirit*; and therefore these *Arguments* are cogent to none but such as these.

Answer, That *Christ* gave himself intentionally for all men, and that God accepted his *Sacrifice* to that *universal end*, is so plain in *Scripture*, that scarce any truth is plainer, 1 *Tim.* 2. 6. *Who gave himself a ransom for all*; 1 *John* 2. 2. *And he is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but for the sins of the whole World.* But because some evade those places by distinguishing of *All* and *World*, that *All* is sometimes taken for some, and *World* for part of the *World*. As if the *Apostle* fore-saw such *Quirks*, and meant to stop every *Mouth*; his words are not liable to evasion, *Heb.* 2. 9. *That he by the Grace of God should taste of Death for every Man.*

And to make mention of no other *Argument* (though I could produce several) if he died for such as deny him and crucifie him to themselves afresh, and finally perish; then he died, no question, for the rest, but that he tasted Death for such is plain, *Heb.* 10. 29. Having in the verse before shewed, the miserable end of those that despised *Moses's Law*; he infers by way of *interrogations*, Of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy of, that hath trodden under foot the *Son of God*, and hath counted the *Blood of the Covenant*, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite to the *Spirit of Grace*; and yet plainer, 2 *Pet.* 2. 1. *There shall be false Teachers* (as the *Apostle* gives them warning, that shall bring in damnable *Herese*,
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denying

denying the *Lord* that bought them: So that hence it is evident, that *Christ* laid down his *Blood* as a price, to redeem them that ungratefully deny him. And if *Christ* had not died for all, it could not be the duty of every man to believe in him. But there is nothing more unquestionable than that every one is bound to believe, and such as refuse, are threatned with a more fearful destruction, because they wickedly frustrate (as much as in them lies) such a wonderful Grace of God, and withstand the highest motive to Repentance and a new life, 1 *Cor.* 6. 20. *Ye are bought with a price, therefore glorifie him in your Body and in your Spirit, which are his.* The *Apostle* speaketh to the *Corinthians* in general, among whom there were many unbelievers. And what's the Argument he useth to perswade them to Faith and newness of Life; but because *Christ* hath shewed such love to them as to die for them; Since he hath offered up his Body upon the Cross for you, do you offer up your Souls and Bodies unto him, to be instruments of Righteousness to do him service, is the force of the *Apostles* Argument.

We see then, that the *Death of Christ* and the *Gift of the Spirit*, are obligations upon all (that hear the Gospel at least) to a thankful Commemoration of the love of God, and a Remembrance of him. There are none that live under the sound and influence of the Gospel, but have the love of *Christ* expressed in his Incarnation, Life and Death, for them to move them externally, by way of Argument, and the powerful Spirit inwardly to check their Corruptions, and prompt them to obedience in some degree and measure; and if they will

will not think upon the one nor submit to the other, but slightly regard the one, and stubbornly resist the other, and stifle every good motion, which they feel, and keep off from any serious thoughts of the death of Christ, and will not be perswaded to consider, the Blood that was shed for them, nor suffer his love to be shed abroad into their hearts by the Holy Spirit. Let such know that their forgetfulness of God is the more heinous, because it hath so fast an obligation as this, to the most necessary duty of remembrance, the *Word* also as well as the *Spirit*. What are all the passages of Scripture, but such as prepare for, or directly stir up to such a Remembrance. You may observe some parts of Scripture more remotely conduce to this grand duty of remembering God; other parts do more immediately serve to produce it where it is wanting, others to reduce and recover it when 'tis lost. So that one of these three ways, either by conducing to it or producing, or reducing of it, all the parts of Gods Word conspire to this principal duty. The main division of the Scripture is into the *Old* and *New Testament*. But what is the design and drift of both these, but to rescue or preserve a Memory of God in the World? Our Saviour sums up the *Old Testament* in these two heads, the *Law* and the *Prophets*. Now what doth the Law serve for, if not to mind us of the great Law-giver, and to beget an awe of his Sovereignty upon the World? And the main end of the Prophets and their Prophecies, was to reproduce this Remembrance of God when the ungrateful People had forgot him. And what can be the end of that Light that hath shined

to us in the Gospel, but to teach us to deny all ungodliness. (~~For~~ Forgetfulness of God) and to live soberly and righteously, and godly in this present evil World, which we can never do without frequent and effectual Remembrance of God and our Lord Jesus Christ.

I might more particularly insist here, and shew how all the *Precepts, Promises, and Threatnings*, which are the three essential parts of *God's Word*, are intended to this end, and will leave the Soul inexcusable that forgets him; or how the several Books of the *Old and New Testament*, which are the *integral parts* of *God's Word*, oblige to this Remembrance. But I think the case is so plain and clear, that none of these ways of demonstration is needful to convince us. That the whole Word of God is no little impulsive, but presseth earnestly to this Remembrance, and is therefore another great Aggravation of the sin of Forgetfulness.

I shall only chuse to set some of those Texts of Scripture before you, that are fullest of Affection and most Pathetical; and that shew how unwilling God is to forget poor sinners, or that they should perish (as they must needs do in their Forgetfulness of him, *Esay* 48. 18; 19.) With what passion doth the Lord mourn over the poor forgetful *Israelites*, that had even now brought utter ruine upon themselves. *O that thou hadst hearkened to my Commandments, then had thy Peace been as a River, and thy Righteousness as the Waves of the Sea. Thy Seed also had been as the Sand, and the off-spring of thy Bowels as the Gravel thereof; and Hos. 11. 8.* When the ten Tribes were got to
such

such a degree of wickedness, that God was not remembered by them any longer, but they had divorced him from them, by their Idolatries, and could bear no longer without disparagement to the Truth and Justice of God; with what unwillingness doth he throw them off? *How shall I give thee up O Ephraim? How shall I deliver thee Israel? How shall I make thee as Admah? How shall I set thee as Zeboim? My Heart is turned within me, my Repentings are kindled together.* What heart that is not desperately sick of stupidity, can hear this sound and not return, and recover the remembrance of him, whom before he had forgot; *O that my People had hearkened unto me, and Israel had walked in my ways! I should soon have subdued their Enemies, and turned my Hand against their Adversaries. The haters of the Lord should have submitted themselves unto him; but their time should have endured for ever. He should have fed them also with the finest of the Wheat, and with Honey out of the Rock should I have satisfied thee, Ps. 81. 13, 14, 15.* Thus you see how these and such like Scriptures Numbers, of which might be gathered together, and as the parts of Gods Word, &c. so the whole do provoke to a Remembrance of God. If the Heathens that want this written Word of God, are notwithstanding bound to keep up a Memory of their Maker, worthy of his Majesty; what an obligation then is the written Word of God to us that have it, to get the knowledge of God, and to feed our thoughts with a delightful remembrance of him? And as the Word of God, so all the Ordinances of God are strong inforcements to this duty. How fit a means is Prayer and Meditation, and

provoke
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singing of Psalms, and participation of the Supper of the Lord, and the Conference of Holy Persons together, to cure the Atheism of our hearts, and to keep us from being unmindful of him, if we mind and attend what we do? As oft as we receive the Sacrament, we are bid to do it in remembrance of him, 1 Cor. 11. 24, 25.

And what shall we forget him, whilst we have such excellent means to get a sight of his Glory and to draw near to him, and acquaint our Souls with him? What a sin must it needs be to forget God, whilst we are calling to him by Prayer, or when he is calling to us, and proclaiming his Sovereignty over us; his right in us, his readiness to receive us? Judge what impudence it is to confer and talk of him, to eat and drink in his presence, to celebrate his Sabbaths, which were appointed as special helps to this Remembrance, and yet to forget him! To pray and hear, and receive the symbols of his Grace, and yet to have a heart void of true Remembrance, is such an aggravation of this sin, as will strike home sooner or later.

Thus you see the aggravations of the sin of Forgetfulness, that arise from the Obligations we have on God's part to remember him.

And as they that forget God, sin against high Obligations on God's part; so

Secondly, They sin against great Obligations,
2. *On their own part*;

Against { 1. Promise and Covenant.
2. Oath.
3. Profession.

And therefore they that forget God, in despite of all these Obligations, are,
1. *First*,

1. *First*, False and perfidious in a high degree, to break Word and Promise with Man, and to be false to one like our self, is enough to imprint a mark of infamy and disgrace, that will stick by as long as life lasteth, and to blast such a mans reputation to all that know him: And how hard a matter is it to wipe off such a reproach, especially if it were a deliberate act in a matter of concernment. And who will repose any trust in such a man, that hath deceived the just expectation of another in any momentous affair, by the breach of his Faith, that hath any acquaintance with him? When a Man hath so behaved himself that none can lay any hold on what he saith, and no trust and confidence can be placed in him; he is unfit for Humane Society. But to be false and perfidious with God, is far more ignominious, and exposeth to worser shame and fouler consequences; for Man hath incomparably greater obligations to truth and sincerity toward God than towards Men. His hatred of such injustice and unfaithfulness is greater than the most upright Man upon Earth can have, and he can far better discover, and will more exemplarily punish it, than any Man hath power or authority to do; and none hath or can have that jurisdiction over us that God hath. If falseness, lying, and perfidiousness, be so hateful to some, even because they have the Image of God, but imperfectly renewed on themselves, we may be sure that God abhors it.

By thy Precepts I get understanding, saith David, and therefore I hate every false way, Psal. 119. 104, &c. Psal. 101. 7, &c. He that worketh deceit shall not dwell within my House; he that telleth lies

lies shall not tarry in my sight. But the breach of Promise and Covenant is a high degree of Falshood and Perfidiousness. A Promise, when 'tis made to God, is called by a special name, a *Vow*. Now what it is to break a Vow, Solomon will inform us, *Eccl. 5. 4, 5. When thou vowest a Vow to God, defer not to pay it, for he hath no pleasure in fools; pay that which thou hast vowed. Better it is thou shouldst not vow, than that thou shouldst vow and not pay.* The reason is, because he that hath made a *Vow* or *Promise* to God, if it be in a case where he was free before, his Promise is now under a Bond, and if he doth not perform, he is insnared by the words of his own mouth, and therefore is a fool; but if it be in a case where he was bound before, he is now bound faster, and hath a streighter Obligation, and in case of Non-performance, he is guilty of greater sin and folly: And the more frequently any Vow or Promise hath been made, the more guilty and perfidious is he that hath failed in the performance; and the Justice to which he hath made himself liable, is the more exacting. And the breach of a solemn Covenant or Contract, is sinful in a higher degree, than the bare breach of Promise; because in a Covenant there is a further motive to Truth and faithful performance, than in a meer Promise; for the advantage and emolument that he expects from the party with whom he hath contracted. So that he is perfidious and unjust in a higher measure. What a sin must it needs be to thrust God out of thy Heart and forget him, to whom thou hast so often promised and vowed Remembrance; for besides thy Baptismal Vow and Promise, every time thou presentest

sentest thy self before him in Publick, Private, or Secret, thou renewest thy Covenant and Promise, to have him for thy All in All; and canst thou indeed make him thy All in All, and not remember him? Canst thou pray by thy self or joyn with others, and not lay any further Obligations upon thy self? Doth that man confess his sin indeed, or mock God that doth not desire the help of God's Grace, and promise in the strength thereof to forsake and renounce it? And can a man promise to let go his sin, and yet not ingage himself to the Remembrance of God, which must be the chief means to seperate and remove it? Can any man pray for mercy and yet not oblige himself by that Prayer to Remember his Benefactor? Can any man be said to thank God for any benefit he hath received, and not promise to order his Conversation aright, that is to his Glory, that hath done so much for him? These are the three general parts of Prayer, and every one of them implies a new Promise and Obligation to this Remembrance. But besides these vertual and implicate Engagements, how oft hast thou expressely promised to be his faithful Servant, to live to thy Redeemer, to be his Disciple, to take his Yoke on thee? How oft hast thou consented and said, *Amen*, when from the Word of God thou hast been told thus much, when the Preacher hath convinced thee, when Conscience hath stirred thee, when Sickness hath awakened thee, when thou hast seen the fruits of a heart unacquainted with God, and seldom conversant with him, hast thou not promised and engaged to become more heavenly? This thou hast done many and many a time, or thou hast

hast withstood the Light, and shut thine Eyes wilfully against all the Calls of God by his Word or Rod; and wilful ignorance will be as high an aggravation of thy sin, as misimproved and abused knowledge, and since it was thy duty every time thou didst approach to God, to reinforce thy vow and promise; if thou hast obstinately refused, thou art virtually guilty of so frequent a breach of promise as it was thy duty to have promised.

And this is the first *aggravation* of the *sin* of *forgetting God*, on their part that do forget, taken from their *breach of Vow* and *Covenant* with him.

Secondly, They that cherish not a worthy *Remembrance* of *God*, are as highly guilty of *Perjury* as they are of *perfidiousness*: Now an Oath is a faster obligation than either *Promise* or *Covenant*. He that tieth himself by *Oath* to any *performance*, doth (*ipso facto*) devote himself to all those *Judgments* that God shall think meet to bring upon him, in case he swear falsely, though it be in any *little matter*. And God himself, when he would give the highest security to *Abraham* for the confirmation of his *Faith*, he takes an *Oath*, *Heb. 6. 13, 14.* when God made *Promise* to *Abraham*, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, saying, *Surely in blessing, I will bless thee, and in multiplying, &c.* and it's said, *Verse 17, 18.* God being willing more abundantly to shew unto the Heirs of *Promise* the Immutability of his counsel, confirmed it by an *Oath*, That by two immutable things (that is *Covenant* and *Oath*) in which it was impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge, to lay hold

hold of the *Hope* set before us; and therefore as a *Promissory Oath* is here supposed to be a firm ground of confident expectation of the *thing* promised, and to be the end of all distrust; so an *Affertory Oath*, is said, *vers.* 16. to be the end of all strife; and the breach of this *Bond* is intolerable in all *Societies*. And it is one of those sins, which God chargeth upon the *Ten Tribes*, when *Hosea* is sent to tell them the lamentable *Tydings* of their divorce from God in the Terms, ~~to~~ *Rushama*, and *Lo-Ammi*. *Rushama*, they shall be no more his *People*, and God will shew no more mercy to them, *Hos.* 10. 4. *They have spoken words swearing falsely, in making a Covenant, and this sin had perverted Judgment, and turned it into Hemlock.* And the flying roll, that is, the terrible *Curse of God*, was to enter into the *House of the Thief*, and into the *House of him that sweareth falsely*, and to remain in the midst of it, and consume it with the *Timber* thereof, and the *Stones* thereof, *Zach.* 5. 4. And *Jerusalem* could stand no longer, but must spue out the *Inhabitants*, after *Zedekiah* had broke the *Oath* of the *Lord* made to the *King of Babylon*, *Ezek.* 17. 16. *As I live, saith the Lord God, surely in the place where the King dwelleth, that made him King, whose Oath he despised, and whose Covenant he brake, even with him in the midst of Babylon shall he die; and Verse 18, 19, 20. seeing he despised the Oath, by breaking the Covenant (when lo he had given his hand) he shall not escape; Therefore, thus saith the Lord, As I live, surely mine Oath that he hath despised, and my Covenant that he hath broken, even it will I recompence upon his own head. And I will spread my Net upon him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring*

bring him to Babylon, and will plead with him there for his trespass that he hath trespassed against me. And you know it cost Saul seven of his Sons that were hung up, to revenge the Oath he had broken to the *Gibonites*, 2 *Sam.* 21. 6. And 'tis noted by *Plutarch*, as one chief cause why *Philip King of Macedon*, with all his posterity were so quickly destroyed because he made no Account of keeping his Oaths, but swore and unswore as might stand with his interest. And the story of *Vladislans King of Hungary*, who had made a league with *Amurath the Great Turk*, and bound himself to it by an Oath, is notorious. When the *Turk* began to be worsted, *Amurath* drew the League out of his Bosom, and lift up his Eyes to Heaven, and said, *O thou Crucified Christ, behold this is the Covenant thy Christians in thy name have made with me, which they have violated. If thou be God, as they say thou art, revenge the wrong now done unto thy Name and Me, and shew thy Power upon thy Perjured People, who in their Deeds deny thee their God.* Immediately after the King was slain, and all his Army routed, as may be seen in the *Turkish History*. What a sin is it then to violate an Oath, not made to Man but God himself, and that in a matter of the highest moment in the VVorld? (1.) Fealty and Allegiance to him from those that are indebted to him, no less than all they have or hope for. And he that forgets God, breaks this Oath of Fealty and Allegiance, due to God for the meer benefits of his production and maintenance; but signally renewed and expressed in Baptism, for the mercy of Redemption by Christ, under whose Command we did then list our selves,

and

and to whom we did sware Love and Obedience. The word *Sacramentum* signifies such an Oath; and this *Sacrament* is an allusion to the custom of VVar, where every Souldier was to bind himself by a Military Oath, to be true to his General. To this Custom Christ the more fitly alludeth it in that Christianity is a Spiritual Warfare. What a high Provocation must it needs be then to forget the Lord, to whose Service and Remembrance we have so tied our selves? VVhoever thou art, that livest under the sound of the Gospel, and that hast been sprinkled with the VVater of Baptism. Thou hast avouched the Lord to be thy God, thou art under Vow, Covenant and Oath, to exalt God in thine Heart, and throw out all other things to manage a daily VVarfare against all his Enemies, and to subdue every Lust that would wipe out the Memory of God, thy Redeemer and Saviour out of thy Heart. This Oath hath been renewed also so oft as thou hast taken the other Sacrament. So that thou hast all this weight to stand under in the day of the Lord, if thou be found amongst those that forget the Lord.

Thiraly, Beside the Bonds of *Vow*, *Covenant* and *Oath*, thou hast the higher Obligations of a constant open *Profession*, to shame thee for thine unmindfulness of God, which must needs be a greater aggravation of this sin, because it implies all the other and superadds pretended reallity in all these, when it is nothing else but Hypocrisie, and deep Dissimulation. It's the worst sort of Enmity that looks like Friendship; and he's an Adversary to be abhor'd that's drest up like a Friend, and doth insinuate into the Heart and Bosom

som of him, whom he intends to betray by pretended Love and Friendship; and therefore *David* lays this sort of injury more to heart than any that he received from open professed Enemies, *Psal. 55. 12, 13, 14.* For it was not an Enemy that reproached me, than I could have born it; neither was it he that hated me, that did magnifie himself against me, than I would have hid my self from him: But it was thou O Man, mine Equal, my Guide and mine Acquaintance; we took sweet Counsel together, and walked unto the House of God in company. And mark what a Character he gives of such a Person; *Psal. 55. 20, 21.* He hath put forth his hands against such as be at peace with him; he hath broken his Covenant. The words of his Mouth were smother than Butter, but War was in his Heart. His words were softer than Oyl, yet were they drawn Swords. There's none have done more mischief in the Church of God, than such as have professed Love and seemed Friends. *Judas* gets into the nearest outward Relation that could be, and acts the greatest wickedness under the disguise of a kiss; and did that effectually, which the *Herodians* attempted with smooth words and pretensions of friendship; but it's said, *Jesus perceived their wickedness and dis-appointed them, Mat. 22. 18.* And who have done the work of the Devil more effectually than those that have professed themselves Christians, that is devoted by Vow, Covenant and Oath to Christ, and yet by Heresie have perverted the Christian Faith, and by Schism have rent and torn his Church, and by Pride and Contention have set it all in a flame? And who were more bitter Enemies to Christ, in his Birth and Infancy, than

than the Jews, who pretended to be the only People in Covenant with God, yet it's manifest from the most authentick Records and impartial History, that they were the most bloody opposers and persecutors of the Gospel; and their fury was the hotter, because it came under a mask of Zeal? And so industrious and implacable was their enmity to the Christian Faith; and so great an impediment was the Jewish Persecution to the plantation and propagation of the Gospel, that Christianity could not spread and grow to any purpose till this Enemy was taken away by a universal Devastation; their Temple and City destroyed; and their Memorial perished from the Earth. Was it not a horrid aggravation of their Irreverence, Contempt, and wicked forgetfulness of God, that they were accompanied with such a zealous Profession of Love and Fidelity to him? The Character that *Josephus*, their own Countreyman, and a most impartial Writer, gives of these men, that boasted they were *Abraham's Seed*, and the Children of the Promise is this, That their wickedness was grown to such a height, that if they had not been swept away by the *Romans*, and destroyed in such numbers, till none almost were left, the very Earth would have opened and swallowed them up.

It is a fearful sin to oppose and fight against God, but to do it in the Garb and Habit of a Friend and Confederate (especially if it be done with design) is such a sin, that will sink the committers of it into deeper condemnation, than the sins of *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah* will them. And professed Enemies are like to scape better than

these seeming Friends; and the more intimate and near the Friendship is that is professed, the Treachery that doth accompany it is the more to be abhorred, and deserves the blacker Character. What then can'st thou expect that God will say to thee, or how dost thou think he will proceed against thee, that callest thy self a Christian, and retest in thy Profession, and makest thy boast of God, and knowest his Will, and approveest the things that are most excellent, being instructed out of the Gospel, *Rom. 2. 17, 18.* And yet the love of Christ constraineth thee not to Repentance, Humility, and the Practice of those Holy Precepts that he hath given thee; the warm Remembrance of his Compassion toward thee, doth not teach to order thy Conversation to the credit of the Gospel. VVhat a Salutation dost thou expect, when thou comest before the presence of his Glory, and standest among his Friends; if he call thee, as thou callest thy self, and say, Friend how camest thou in hither? thou wilt but tremble the more at such a word, that will have such a dreadful sentence at the heels, and be accompanied with such a terrible doom, as shall make thee to abhor a friend to all eternity, that deals so like an Enemy. O consider this thou that forgettest God, and yet hast bound thy self so fast by Vow, Covenant, Oath and Profession, to remember him. If those that take pains to imprint him upon their hearts day by day, by a fresh Remembrance of his amazing Goodness, shall scarce be saved, where shall such a false, perfidious, perjur'd Hypocrite as thou appear? Or how wilt thou be able to stand in Judgment? *Psal. 1. 5.* God will not be

be mocked, neither can he be deceived; he expecteth thy service, and it is due to him, whether he have or have not thy consent. But when thou dost acknowledge what thou art indebted to him, and hast vowed hearty Subjection and Obedience to him, and bound thy self by all the fore-mentioned Bonds, thou canst not but see thy sin in forgetting him so well, ~~and~~ rise higher, and bring a more heinous guilt upon thee.

I have done with the aggravation of this sin, and shew'd the *heinousness* of it, in that it is a sin against

The highest Obligations { 1. On God's part.
2. On Ours.

I come now to shew the *danger of this sin*.

VVhich will appear in the woful effects that tread upon it and follow after it. In that,

This Sin is apt to produce { 1. *The worst of Sins*
2. *The worst of Judgments* } *On us.*

1. *First*, This sin is apt to lead the way to all ungodliness; and to multiply into all sin and absurdity whatsoever. There's no Practice so monstrous and unnatural, none so base and sordid, none so filthy and disgraceful, but he that forgets God is in the road way to, and may commit; nay, if the VVind serve, and Tyde run that way, I mean, if the Temptations to it be strong, and God do not restrain him, he will certainly com-

mit : For where God is not uppermost, as he cannot be there where he is not remembered : These, The *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eye*, and the *Pride of Life*, will get the upper hand, and animate that wretched Heart wherein they dwell, to all *filthy, sordid, and monstrous practices*, you can imagine or think upon. I do not say that they do all (*de facto*) actually prevail, where God is forgotten, much less do I say that these three sins multiply into all that litter of other depending sins, as have their life and maintenance from these. But only this I say, that where God is not *worthily Remembered*, there one or more of these sins have dominion, and all may take their turns, and so turn that Man into a very Devil in Humane Shape. For what is there to stop the raging power of Lust and Concupiscence, and controul the fury of inordinate Passions, if you take away this bridle, and there be none or very little awe and reverence of God upon the Heart. *If you say* that Reason may curb and keep in a Carnal Fleshly Heart from all notable excess and Inordinancy ? *I answer*, That since the Fall, Reason is not able to stand against the Flesh, having lost its strength by the loss of Gods Image, unless it be where it is assisted by the common Grace of God. For Mans end being here below and not above, Flesh, with its affections, must needs be the leading part, and Reason must needs lie still and sleep, whilst Sense is domineering, or else strike in with the Flesh, and become a servant to its Lusts. For a Man can rise no higher than his end, no more than the VVater can above the Spring Head : God being cast off, something must supply

supply his room. Man will not be at rest till he hath a happiness *seeming or real*; and therefore since he hath renounced God which is real, he must needs chuse Creatures which are but so in appearance; since he hath forsaken the Fountain, he must have recourse to the Cistern; since he will not build upon the Rock he must build upon the Sand, and have his Hope and Foundation in the Dust; and having once made Flesh his Confidence, he will rather fight against God, and all that opposeth him than be driven from his hold. VVhat a Man takes for his happiness he will hold it as his very Life and Being, and as soon part with the one as with the other. VVhat • sin will a Man stick at to wind himself into a faster possession of what he thinks to be his happiness? and having thrown God out of his Memory, he will quickly decay in his Heart and Affections. And when there is little or no fear or love of him, what should perswade a man to refuse the tempting pleasures of sin? Neither will he take that for a sin in which he is practically perswaded his happiness doth consist. Hence it is that the vilest and most shameful sinners; when once they have wip'd out the Memory of God out of their Hearts, which at last they attain to, through frequent and customary delight in those brutish Pleasures, they verily think at last that they are no sins, and will plead for the worst of them. I know that many do not, neither can they arrive to such a height of wickedness, because God will not permit them, neither can they get all awe and fear of him out of their Hearts; but this is no thanks to them, neither doth it disprove what I said before.

mit : For where God is not uppermost, as he cannot be there where he is not remembered : These, The *Lust of the Flesh*, the *Lust of the Eye*, and the *Pride of Life*, will get the upper hand, and animate that wretched Heart wherein they dwell, to all *filthy, sordid, and monstrous practices*, you can imagine or think upon. I do not say that they do all (*de facto*) actually prevail, where God is forgotten, much less do I say that these three sins multiply into all that litter of other depending sins, as have their life and maintenance from these. But only this I say, that where God is not *worthily Remembered*, there one or more of these sins have dominion, and all may take their turns, and so turn that Man into a very Devil in Humane Shape. For what is there to stop the raging power of Lust and Concupiscence, and controul the fury of inordinate Passions, if you take away this bridle, and there be none or very little awe and reverence of God upon the Heart. *If you say* that Reason may curb and keep in a Carnal Fleishly Heart from all notable ~~Excess~~ and Inordinancy ? *I answer*, That since the Fall, Reason is not able to stand against the Flesh, having lost its strength by the loss of Gods Image, unless it be where it is assisted by the common Grace of God. For Mans end being here below and not above, Flesh, with its affections, must needs be the leading part, and Reason must needs lie still and sleep, whilst Sense is domineering, or else strike in with the Flesh, and become a servant to its Lusts. For a Man can rise no higher than his end, no more than the VVater can above the Spring Head : God being cast off, something must supply

supply his room. Man will not be at rest till he hath a happiness *seeming or real*; and therefore since he hath renounced God which is real, he must needs chuse Creatures which are but so in appearance; since he hath forsaken the Fountain, he must have recourse to the Cistern; since he will not build upon the Rock he must build upon the Sand, and have his Hope and Foundation in the Dust; and having once made Flesh his Confidence, he will rather fight against God, and all that opposeth him than be driven from his hold. VVhat a Man takes for his happiness he will hold it as his very Life and Being, and as soon part with the one as with the other. VVhat a sin will a Man stick at to wind himself into a faster possession of what he thinks to be his happiness? and having thrown God out of his Memory, he will quickly decay in his Heart and Affections. And when there is little or no fear or love of him, what should perswade a man to refuse the tempting pleasures of sin? Neither will he take that for a sin in which he is practically perswaded his happiness doth consist. Hence it is that the vilest and most shameful sinners; when once they have wip'd out the Memory of God out of their Hearts, which at last they attain to, through frequent and customary delight in those brutish Pleasures, they verily think at last that they are no sins, and will plead for the worst of them. I know that many do not, neither can they arrive to such a height of wickedness, because God will not permit them, neither can they get all awe and fear of him out of their Hearts; but this is no thanks to them, neither doth it disprove what I said before.

(1.) That forgetfulness of God, is apt in its own nature, unless it be curbed by Providence, to lead into all wickedness whatsoever, even the highest degree of it. *Balaam* will attempt for the love of Honour and Riches, to serve the King of the *Moabites* wicked purpose, and to curse the People of God, if an Angel with a drawn Sword in his hand, do not stand in his way, and hinder the execution of his wicked intent. So wicked Persons, that have no *true Remembrance of God*, will commit any wickedness, that seems necessary to compass what they have set their hearts upon, and will not give over till Providence crosseth them, and will not let them bring their Device to pass. If Honour be the end of any Person that forgets God, he will not stick at any sin that will but promote his end and serve this Lust. If Rule and Power be the thing that a Man hath set up for his Idol, he will take any way rather than miss that which will be ever in his thought and remembrance, either actually or virtually, because it hath gotten into his heart. As we cannot remember those things that we do not love and reverence, so we cannot but remember what we do reverence and love. You see then how dangerous it is to *forget God*; such a one will remember something else, that will betray him to all base and wicked Practices, that will bring him under the power of the Devil, who ruleth in the Children of Disobedience, and bring upon him the wrath of God, which cometh upon the Children of Disobedience.

I might here shew you how this *Sin* is the breach of the great and most fundamental Commandment,

ment, as our Saviour calls it, *Mark 12. 30. Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy Soul, and with all thy Strength.* This is the first Commandment; for he that doth not remember him cannot do this; and where there is no true *subjection of the Soul* to God, implied in this Commandment, there can be no true Obedience implied in any of the other Commands. And therefore he that is guilty of breaking this, is prepared for the breach of all the other, because they are animated by this, and have their obliging power and authority from it. You see then the danger of this sin, if then thou darest let God slip out of thy mind, thou knowest not what will succeed and enter in his room, nor what wickedness thou mayst commit; for thou art tumbling down hill and canst never stop, by any inward power of thine own, unless Providence lay an impediment before thee, and hinder thee coming to the bottom (that is, I mean, to the top of all impiety.)

2. *Secondly*, If thou forget God he will cast thee out of his Remembrance, and make thee to know the sin which thou hast committed by the Punishment that is inflicted, *Psal. 9. 16. Then the Lord will be known by the Judgment that he executeth.* As thou shuteest thine Eyes against him now, and will not remember him in the Pride of thy Heart, so he will not remember thee in thy distress, and in the day of the anguish of thy heart; yea, though thou criest to him with importunity, he will shut his Ears, God hath spoken and he will make it good. *When you spread forth your hands I will bide mine Eyes from you; yea, when you*

make many Prayers I will not hear, Esay 1. 15.
 And canst thou be content to be forgotten of God,
 when *Reproach hath broken thy heart, and thou art*
full of heaviness; and when thou lookest about thee
for some to take pity, and there is none; and for Com-
forters and thou canst find none? *Psal. 69. 20.* *When*
thy Flesh faileth thee, and thy Heart also, canst thou
be content that God should also fail thee? *Psal. 73. 26.*
 When thy Mirth and Pleasure are fled away from
 thee, and thou hast nothing but Gall to eat, when
 thou shalt thirst and have nothing but Vinegar for
 thy drink, *Psal. 69. 21.* Canst thou be content
 to have this dreg put into thy Cup, and to have
 no God to remember thee? When thy Friends
 fail thee, and thy nearest Comforts deal deceitfully
 with thee, as a Brook deceiveth the thirsty Tra-
 veller (in those hot Countreys where Water was
 scarce) that repairs to it for Refreshment, and
 when he came behold it is dried up, *Job 6. 15.*
 What a cutting thought will it be to thee, if God
 forget thee also? Nay, to come a little nearer to
 thee, what wilt thou do when thou walkest through
 the valley of the shadow of death? *Psal. 23. 4.*
 When the pains of Hell take hold on thee, and
 the sorrows of the Grave compass thee about?
 How wilt thou be comforted if the Lord fly from
 thee, and thy cry will not be suffered to come
 into his Ears? *Psal. 18. 4, 5, 6.* Canst thou be
 content to be forgotten for ever, when the Right-
 eous shall be had in everlasting Remembrance?
Psal. 112. 6. Surely thy Spirit will be over-
 whelmed within thee, and thy Heart within thee
 will be filled with Desolation and Astonishment,
Psal. 143. 4. Alas! alas! thou canst scarce bear
 it:

it : If a Father , a Husband , or Brother , or one of these thy dearest Friends , look strangely on thee . We may very well think that it went near *Job* , when he complained that his Kinsfolk failed him , and his familiar Friends forgot him , *Job* 19. 14. yea , that his Breath was strange to his Wife , though he entreated her for the Childrens sake of his own Body , *ver. 17* . And canst thou endure to be forgotten of him that's ten thousand times a better Friend ? Will it not break thy Heart when he that can only help thee , shall say , Verily he knows thee not ? *Mat. 25. 12* . *Behold I cry out of wrong* , saith *Job* , *but I am not heard* , *I cry a loud but there is no Judgment* , *Job* 19. 7 . Whether wilt thou go for help , when this shall be thy case , and it shall be truly said , there is no help for him in his God ; when he who is the God of Salvation shall not hear thee , *Psal. 68. 20* . Thou shalt surely speed as the forgetters of God have always done ; they cried but there was none to save them , even unto the Lord , but he answered them not , *Psal. 18. 41* . Not unlikely , but thou canst hold up thy Heart , and keep thy Heart whole , and abate nothing of thy confidence , when God hideth himself , whilst thou art warm in outward Prosperity , and there is no want of these outward Comforts ; as with a Sword in thy Bones it woundeth thee not , though it be said unto thee , where is now thy God , *Psal. 42. 10* . Thou canst pray unto God , it may be (if thy forgetfulness of God hath not put thee past that duty) or rather put up a few lifeless words instead of Prayer , and never look as *David* did , *Psal. 5. 3* . nor care whether he send down any Prayers , yea , or not ,

answer to thy

whilst

whilst thy Breasts are full of Milk, and thy Bones are moistened with Marrow, *Job* 21. 24. And thou hast full measure of temporal Comforts. Thou canst lay thee down in Peace and rest, and sleep quietly; if the Lord make thee to dwell safely and plentifully in this World, though thou knowest not whether he remember or forget thy Soul, *Psal* 4. 8. But when the *fire of thy Hearth* is gone out, and sin hath kindled a *fire in thy Heart and Conscience*, then thou wilt cry out bitterly to God, whom thou canst so easily forget, Wherefore hidest thou thy Face, and countest me for thine Enemy, *Job* 13. 24. It may be whilst thou art surrounded with outward mercies, and hast a spring tide of these present comforts, and the stream run full, and waters of a full cup are wrung to thee, *Psal* 73. 10. When our Gardeners are full of all manner of store, *Psal* 144. *ver.* 13. and we have the priviledge of outward communion with God also, we are content with the want and absence of God, and the sense of his sweetest Love, and with a negligent heartless service of him, if not a total neglect: And the World hath had our Hearts, when we have put off God with words and wishes, and a few confessions that come not from the Heart, nor tend to any considerable Reformation. But when the things that our Souls lust after shall be snatched away, and all our dear enjoyments which we have sinfully preferred before God are gone; when Creatures shall refuse to give out their Comforts any longer, and our darling Delights, which lie in our Bosoms (and are to us as Children are to doting Parents) are gone, and we shall want also the outward

outward Ordinances, which serve to keep us in a deluding peace; when *Hophni* and *Phineas* are slain, I mean our sweetest Comforts, and the Ark of God also is removed, and the Glory departed from us, *1 Sam.* 4. 11, 21. Our Hearts that are so backward to feel now, will then break and be overwhelmed; then we shall better understand what it is both to *forget* and to be *forgotten* of God. It's the comfort of one that remembereth God above his chief joy, *Psal.* 137. 6. and worth a World, that though the publick Calamities be never so dreadful, and a thousand fall at his Side, yea, ten thousand at his right Hand, yet God remembereth him; and though personal miseries multiply upon him, and he hath neither comfort nor taste to relish it through want of health; if he can say unto men I am poor and needy, yet the Lord thinketh on me; and unto God, Thou art my help and deliverer, make no long tarrying, O my God, *Psal.* 40. 17. If he hath true ground to say, *As for me thou upholdest me in mine integrity, and wilt set me before thy Face for ever, Psal.* 41. 12. But it is the heart-break of one that hath forgotten God, that distress is come upon him, and God remembers him not. Such a case was *Saul* in when he went to a Witch to raise up *Samuel*, that he might consult a little with him; and when she had brought up *Samuel* to him, *Samuel* said to *Saul*, *Why hast thou disquieted me to bring me up?* It would make a mans heart ake to hear his doleful reply; And *Saul* answered, *I am sore distressed, for the Philistines make War against me, and God is departed from me, and answereth me no more,* *1 Sam.* 28. 15. This is another woful effect

effect and consequent of this sin; those that cast God out of their Remembrance, God will forget them.

But stay, this is not all, for,

3. *Thirdly*, As he will forget their Persons, so he will remember their sins; *Amos 8. 7. The Lord hath sworn by the excellency of Jacob, surely I will never forget any of their works*; speaking of the forgetful *Israelites*. If God would forget them wholly, and neither remember their Persons nor Actions, their misery would not be so fearful as now it is. But this will be an intolerable thought to them, that as God, when he is marking out his Servants for Deliverance and Salvation, he will pass them by; so when he is bringing the most horrible Calamity upon the World, I mean at Death and Judgment (if not before, he will be sure not to pass them by) It's sad tidings to them that they must be forgotten in the day of their distress, but worse in their account and esteem, that when the Lord maketh inquisition for sin, he will certainly *remember them*, *Psal. 9. 12.* Then they shall pay dear for all their former forgetfulness of God, and their damnable inadvertency to his Word and Works. As it is a fearful thing to fall out of the rewarding hands of God, and to be forsaken and forgotten, so it is more dreadful to fall into the revenging hand of God, and to be so remembered. For as God is the best and most desirable Friend, so he is the worst and most formidable Enemy, and both these ways thou shalt rue thy contempt and forgetfulness of him. Thou shalt want him as thy friend when thou hast the greatest need, and have him

as thine Enemy when thou art most afraid. Then thou wilt say in vain, as *Balak* said to *Balaam*, *Num. 23. 25. Neither curse us at all, nor bless us at all.* But as he will with-hold his Blessing from them, when those that are *mindful of him here* shall have it to the full. So he will pronounce a Curse upon them, which they shall never claw off, *Mat. 25. 41. Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire prepared for the Devil and his Angels.* As there is none that hath a *Heart* like him, when he is shewing pity and compassion to his penitent humble servants, that are ever mindful of him; so there is none that hath a *Hand* like him, when he will render vengeance to those that do forget him, and plague those that hate him. He hath yet left it to thy choice, whether thou wilt seek him in good earnest as one that prizeth his Love, and valueth his Spirit above all things; or whether thou wilt more highly respect and value any thing else (for what hath thine highest respect, will be remembered by thee when all other things are forgotten.) But he hath not left it to thy choice whether he shall abhor thee, yea, or not, or whether he shall recompence thy wickedness upon thine own head or not, if thou be found guilty; but will certainly lead thee forth with the workers of iniquity, and make thee know what it is to use thy memory for no higher matters than the World, and to put God to remember thee by forgetting him; and this will cure the wicked Lethargy and Stupidity of thy Soul, and make thee to remember him against thy will, even to all eternity; forget him then if thou canst, as an angry and revenging Judge, when thou wilt not remember him

him now as a most gracious and compassionate Redeemer.

And thus I have given some imperfect sight of the heinousness and danger of this sin.

Whereby it is evident what a madness, as well as wickedness it is to be guilty of this sin; and herein I might more convincingly shew the danger of this sin, and by consequence the folly and madness of those that do not remember him above their chief joy, by giving them a fuller description,

Of the {	1. Fearfulness	{ of Gods Anger that will break out against the forgetters of him; and so,
	2. Unavoidableness	

They that undervalue and therefore forget God;

They forget themselves, and undervalue their own welfare and security.

But I pass this for present and proceed to the next Use.

2. Use. Examination.

Which may serve for tryal to discover whether we have had, or still have any fellowship in this provoking sin. And here I shall ^{not} trouble you with marks and discoveries meerly probable, but give you such as are inseparable from the sin we are searching for, or rather reciprocal with it. Reciprocal signs I call those that are conversible with the thing they are the signs of. (1.) Wherefore there is this Symptom; there is this Disease; and where

where there is this Disease, there is this Symtom. Wheresoever there are these marks there is forgetfulness of God, and wheresoever there is forgetfulness of God, it is accompanied with these marks. If I should mention no more than what are contained in the *Answer to the second Question. viz.* Who they are that forget God, it were enough they that have not a competent knowledge of the Remembrance of the great Perfections of God, and the Relations that he stands in to them. I mean, that he is 1. Their *Creator*. 2. Their absolute *Lord* and *Governour*, whom they have the highest motives to obey. 3. That he is their *Judge* that must pass the *Sentence* of everlasting *Happiness* or *Misery* on them ere long. 4. That he that is thus related to them is *Omniscient*, and nothing they can think or do can escape his *Eye*. 5. That he is their *Happiness*, without whose Favour and inward Grace they can never be at rest.

2. They that have not a competent knowledge of their own *frequent* and *great necessities*.

3. They that have not a competent knowledge and Remembrance of his Word. 1. As it is his Word. (1.) Of Divine Authority, and therefore worthy of the greatest Reverence and Study. 2. As it contains in it matters of deepest importance to them. 3. And of certain and near accomplishment.

4. They that do not competently understand and consider his works.

By competent I mean such a degree and measure of knowledge and consideration of these, as doth 1. Turn their hearts from all Creatures to
God,

God, and enable them deliberately and resolutely to chuse him for their happiness, which they can never do without a sufficient or competent knowledge of these; and which they will do if they have a sufficient knowledge and remembrance of these. 2. And turn their hearts to Christ, as the principal means to bring them to this happiness, by his Laws directively, and by his Spirit effectively. This I mean by competent, that which is sufficient to these ends.

Now what degree and measure of knowledge and consideration it is that's thus competent, it's not possible to define, because it is not in all alike; with some a lower degree and measure of this knowledge and consideration will make this change, others need a higher measure, having stiffer Corruptions to overcome. And as the same proportion of strength will not ~~elevate~~ ^{move} a stone of an hundred pounds weight from the Earth, which will one of twenty or forty. So the same Grace will not turn a Heart that hath stronger Affections to the Earth, which will effectually convert one that hath weaker, and hath not so strong a bias, weight and inclination to fasten it to the World.

He that hath one of these marks hath all, and he that is guilty of these is forgetful of God. So that by these you may acquit or condemn yourselves.

These marks alone, I say, were sufficient to detect the sin, if I should mention no other; but yet I shall add two other, which will discover the sin both negatively and affirmatively, that is, prove us guilty or not guilty of this sin, according as we are, or are not guilty of them.

First, They that have not a higher and greater love to God than to any other thing else, are guilty and forgetters of him. The reason is, because what we love we remember; and what we love best we remember most. And on the contrary, what we do not love and care for we forget; and the less we care for it the more we do forget it. Art thou one therefore that lovest God above all, than he will have the highest place in thy Remembrance. I do not say he will be thought on as often as any thing else, because God hath laid such duty upon most of us that requireth more frequent Thoughts of other things than of him; but yet our thoughts of him will be frequent, and though they be fewer than our thoughts of other things, yet whatsoever their number be, they will more command the Affections and Actions than all other thoughts whatsoever, or else we shall come under the dreadful guilt of forgetfulness of God.

Secondly, Thou art a forgetter of God, if any one sin do habitually prevail in thee, and do lead thee captive for the most part, because this will extinguish the love of God in thee, and consequently all worthy Remembrance of him. Art thou one therefore that allowest thy self in any one sin? then thou art a forgetter of God; or if thou dost not trouble thy self with such thoughts, nor dost much matter what prevails, rather any thing than puzzle thy self with reflections on thy self; thou forgettest thy self, and therefore must needs forget God. For the knowledge of thy own necessities, of which sin is the greatest, is one necessary requisite to the due Remembrance of God.

But I intend not to insist on these.

Lastly, As I *implied before*, if thou hast a worthy Remembrance of God, thou dost competently understand and consider the ordinary works of God. So I *say now*, - Thou wilt much more reverence and observe the extraordinary works of his Hand, and applaud his Justice when his Judgements are more signal. The reason is, because these are more apt to provoke consideration, which is ready to sleep when things run on in a constant course and order. And therefore who is it that makes any matter of a River that runs on a constant stream or course? But if it stop without any visible cause, all the Town and Country comes to behold it. Who regards the Sun, Moon and Stars, that are obvious to our daily Eye? Or the orderly site and motion of them? They are but few; but if there appear two Suns or two Moons, or a Star extraordinary, never seen before, what running and gazing every where; and they that will scarce step out of doors to behold an ordinary Star, will break their Sleep and lose their Rest, and venture their Health to see a dreadful Comet or Blazing star. The like may be said for the motion of them who minds the daily rising and setting of the Sun? But if it should stand still a day, or go backward ten degrees, as it did in the days of *Joshua* and *Hezekiah*, *Joshua* 10. 13. 2 *Kings* 20. 11. Who would not take notice? God will not be slighted in his ordinary daily works; but when he doth a Miracle, or a strange and unusual Work,

he

he calls for a more special attention and reverent observation. It's sinful ~~not~~ to go on and not to lift up an Eye and acknowledge God and observe his VVisdom and Power in his common Providences; but it's wicked stupidity not to stop and consider Providences that rarely come to pass and seldom fall out. Doth not every extraordinary act of Justice call out and say? *Come behold and see what Desolations he hath wrought in the Earth, Psal. 46. 8.* VVhen he is shaking a Nation by VVar, and overturning the Glory of it; or when scourging a Nation with Pestilence or Famine, he doth in effect say, *Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted amongst them, I will be glorified in them, or on them, Psal. 46. 10.* Justice is one of his essential Perfections, and when that is cleared and sin made odious, by remarkable penalty, and the devouring evils that it ushers in, then God is acknowledged and glorified.

And when this is done by the voluntary act of those that feel the hand, it's an act of terrible affrighting Justice in the beginning, but glorious, wonderful, and most endearing mercy in the end. The Lord is now throwing us by heaps into the place of forgetfulness, because we have so remarkably forgotten him; Who hath fed us with the finest of the VVheat and Honey out of the Rock, *Psal. 81. 14.* I mean with the blessings of Heaven and Earth, and doth he not expect that we should be silent and meditate terror, *Esay 33. 18.* And applaud his Justice and Holiness, and that our Bowels should more yearn over the distressed cause and interest of Holiness, which our sin hath injured, than the Carcases of our dearest

Friends, that fall like Dung upon the Earth. It is most certainly true, that every honest faithful heart, that's sincerely dedicated unto God, and which God will own hereafter, that he is more heartily troubled in his deliberate thoughts, for the wrong sin hath done to God, than for the saddest calamity it brings upon men. VVhat man that hath the love of God and Holiness predominant in his Heart, that can particularly think of the sins of this Nation and the City, which is the chief Theatre of this present Judgment, the Atheism, gross and open Prophaneness, perfidious Hipocrisie, shameful Ingratitude, beastly Filthiness, Contempt both of Mercy and Judgment, Pride of both sorts, Spirit and Flesh, Luxury, Injustice and Oppression; and with what a publick impudent Face they are committed, and that after such Obligations so fresh before our Eyes. VVhat true Child of God can consider this and not cry out in some true sense of Gods dishonour? *My Bowels, my Bowels, I am pained at the very Heart, my Heart maketh a noise within me, Jer. 4. 19.* And though he doth compassionate the suffering Nation, and those in particular that feel this severity, yet consideration forceth him to say from his Soul, *Thy way and thy doings have procured these things unto thee, for thy wickedness is bitter, it reacheth to the very Heart, Jer. 4. 18.* VVe have liv'd under excellent light and means in a Nation, where our dearest Saviour hath been made known this 1600 years. (1.) Almost from his very Passion, and we have liv'd under a profession of Faith, and have acknowledged our high engagement to love and obedience of our Redeemer.

deemer. How frequent have the obliging names of Saviour and Redeemer been in our Mouths? and our Lips have droped free Grace and Mercy, like the Honey-comb, and our words to him have been smoother than Oyl; and yet what could we have done more wickedly than we have done, if we had no Faith at all? If we had been meer Heathens, and looked for no other Life? and if we had no fear of Judgment? Nay, have we stuck at those sins that Turks and Heathens do abhor? It's a true, though a shameful confession. And now shall we pity a suffering, and not abhor a sinful People? Hath the Lord broke in upon us before many a fair warning; we have had *ubera* many times, before we have felt *verbera*; we have had lightning before thunder. Are not all these Examples that he hath set before us, both in sacred and prophane Writ, so many Warning-pieces shot off to prevent the approaching Enemy? Doth he not say to us, by his Word, as he did to the Rebellious Jews, *Jer. 7. 12. Go ye now unto Shiloe, where I set my Name at the first, and see what I did to it for the wickedness of my People Israel. Go ye to the City and Temple of Jerusalem, and see what I have done for the wickedness thereof. Go ye to Sodom, to the old World, see how their sins have found them out. Consult the several Nations, to which the Prophets pronounced their several burdens, and see how they have sped for their Iniquities. Cast thine Eye upon Greece, and other parts of Christendom, upon whom the Lord hath let in the overflowing Scourge; the barbarous Turk for their kicking at his Sacrificies, and negligence in his Worship.*

Look upon *Germany*, where the Lord made such fearful Desolation; time not yet out of mind. Remember the late unnatural War and Bloodshed in our own Nation; how it emptied the Nation, plagued the Inhabitants; for wickedness burneth as the fire; it shall devour the Bryers and Thorns, *Esay* 9. 18. How long hath the Lord waited on us, expecting fruit, looking for Reformation. Think not that the Lord dealeth hardly; charge him not foolishly if he call for the Sickle, for the Harvest is ripe, the Presses are full, the Fats overflow, for our Iniquities are risen high, *Joel* 3. 13. What could the Lord have done more for us in a way of mercy than he hath done, and therefore no wonder that Judgment follow us! Thus if thou hast a worthy Remembrance of God, thou wilt consider his more remarkable Providences, and plead the cause of his Justice, in the present sad condition into which sin hath brought us.

Use. Exhortation.

If then it be such a sin to forget God, as there hath been proof enough it is, then let this stir us up to more frequent thoughts of God, and to a more worthy *Remembrance* of him. What such a Remembrance doth import I think I need not waste time to shew, since it is opposed to forgetfulness; and contraries do discover each other; by these two known and obvious Rules, 1. Contraries ^{are} in or about the same Subject, and the subject of the one is neither larger nor scanter than the other (e.g.) Sight and

and Blindness are about the Eye. The same Air is the Subject both of Light and Darkness, and Vertue and Vice are subjected in the same Soul, though not at the same time. 2. Though Contraries are about the same Subject, yet they have contrary Affections (*e. g.*) If Vertue be lovely, Vice is Odious. If Light discovers all things, than Darkness covers all things. Since therefore, 1. As I said, Forgetfulness is not an act of the Memory only, so neither is Remembrance. And 2. As every degree of Remembrance doth not acquit a Man from the odious guilt of Forgetfulness, so neither is every degree of Forgetfulness inconsistent with this Remembrance. If God have the Sovereignty and Preheminence in thy Heart, he will accept it, otherwise it is not a Remembrance worthy of him. I need say no more, for if we know what it is to *forget God*, we cannot but know what is to *Remember him*. If we know who they are that forget God, we must needs know who they are that Remember him. But lest what hath been spoken should not be so Remembered and set together, I shall only give a short draught of the Duty, or rather bring it fresh to your Remembrance, that you may know whether the Exhortation tendeth, and not be excited to you know not what.

In a word therefore,

This Remembrance of God, implies such frequent and worthy thoughts of God, as command the Affections of our Hearts, and the Actions of our Lives, more than any thing else besides.

And is it not pity that the Heart of Man should be so backward to this duty, and so hardly prompted to such a sightly and becoming work; and that all that can be spoke to recommend this duty, and to spur up to this Remembrance, unless God set it home, is like to be at best, but like the beating or cutting the Air, which seems to receive a wound, but it presently closeth again, and no abiding impression is left behind. Alas! alas! that we should stuff our Hearts with Feathers, and think upon vanity and never tire; and that the bias of our Souls should be quite another way than towards God! That he that should be our sweetest Meditation is so great a stranger to us! How seldom do we erect a thought to him, or think on him with pleasure and delight! We can even lose our selves in vain and earthly thoughts, and think on nothing else almost from morning to night! But he that is our support all the day long, is ever about our Paths and about our Bed, for our defence and safety, hath a poor little share in our Thoughts and Affections. Art thou not fully satisfied that he is to be loved with all thy Heart and Soul, and Strength, and that he is worthy of Love and Obedience, and a thousand fold more than thou art able to give? The excellency of his Nature and Goodness unto thee must needs extort this confession. How can we better

better employ our Thoughts, than upon him that gave us our *Thinking Faculty*? To what better purpose canst thou use thy Reason, than to fetch something from every Object that is presented to thee, to put thee in mind of God? Every thing is big with Instruction, and proffers its help to bring thee nearer unto God, if thou wilt be taught. Thou canst take no better course to advance thy self than to advance him in thy thoughts. Thou canst make no better use of Creatures, than to make them a means to bring God and thy Heart together. *To the Heavens and to the Earth*, and to all that is in them, and if they teach thee not this Lesson, it is because they are Traytors and not Creatures; but the fault is thine and not theirs. Thou canst not make a better use of Scripture than to imprint God deeper in thy Remembrance. *To the Laws and to the Testimonies*, if they teach thee not thus much, it is because thou wilt not learn, and there is no light in thee, *Esay 8. 20.* As thou lovest thy self and thine own welfare, make thine advantage of every thing, to promote him higher in thy Mind and Heart. Since thou hast so much Instruction round about thee to bring God to thy Remembrance, and such a light both in Nature and in Scripture to discover it, and such Assistance to fetch it in by Meditation into thine Understanding and Affections, and such opportunities to learn what is thus suggested, and when there is such sweetness in the very act of Learning, and the benefits that directly flow from thence are so incomparable, the final reward so unspeakable; refuse not to apply thy Heart to the highest Wisdom! All other thoughts that are
not

not subordinate to this Remembrance, have a greater or lesser tendency to discontent and vexation; but these are the only comforting and reviving Meditations. If thou dost not forget thy self thou wilt remember him. If thou dost not forget thy later end, thou wilt remember him. If thou wilt but remember the days of Anguish and Trouble that are coming on thee, thou wilt remember him. Thou wilt then say, be not far from me when trouble is near and there is none to help. O let him not be far from thee now, keep him in the midst of thy Heart, renew thy thoughts of him as thou sittest in thy House, as thou walkest by the way, as thou liest down, and as thou risest up, *Deut. 6. 8.* Imagine thou seest him in his Word. Suppose that thou beholdest him in his Works; think thou hast a taste of him, whilst thou art feeding thy self, and refreshing thy Body with its daily Food and Sustenance. For thou livest not by Bread alone, nor by such dead things as these, but by the Word and Blessing of God, that only can give thee life, *Deut. 8. 3. Matth. 4. 3.* Oh how much doth man undervalue himself, whilst he remembers not whose Coin he is, and whose Stamp he bears! He turns the fairest Gold into a Counter, and uncoins himself, and can never understand his own worth if he leave God out of his thoughts. If thou wouldst think of thy own reasonable nature, and put that question to thy self, which was maliciously put to our Saviour by the Pharisees and some of Herod's Disciples, *Mark 12. 16. Whose is this Image and Superscription.* And this would bring God to thy Remembrance, that hath fearfully made thee, *Psal. 139. 14.* Thou art Brass indeed,

indeed, if thou canst impute such a stamp as this to any other cause, and give away this Divine Royalty as thou dost, if thou forget the Mint out of which thou camest, and where thou wast stamped; if thou remembrest any thing, or hast any kindness or respect for thy own Soul, acquaint thy self with God, remember him and be at peace, *Job 22. 21.*

To provoke to this Duty, besides what hath been already hinted, I shall only suggest thus much further by way of Interrogation.

First, Doth God remember thee every hour, and canst thou make shift for all that not to remember him? If thou didst not need the Heavens that hang over thy Head, nor the Earth that hangeth under thy Feet, nor any of those Creatures that stand round about thee. If thou wouldst spare the light and influence of the Sun, and want the Air that's turned in and out at thy Nostrils, and keep in the little spark of Life, without the Meat and Drink that feedeth it every Day, and the hot Embers that cover it every Night, I mean the warm Bed and Sleep wherewith it is cherished and refreshed; or if thou couldst bid all Creatures to go and come at thy pleasure, then it were a more excusable sin not to remember God; but when it is so great a certainty that these are all the means and instruments that he hath made, and doth use to conveigh his Blessings to us, and that we cannot live a moment without one or other of them, thou art an Atheist in Judgment or Practice if thou forget him. Thou mayst as well stand without a
Foundation,

Foundation, or see without Eyes, or hear without the hearing Faculty, as live without one or other of his Mercies every moment. If thou hadst nothing else to endear the thoughts of God to thee, and to make the Remembrance sweet, even the *privative* mercies of a *meer private*^{to} nature, have a mighty force to one that doth but consider them. If we do but acknowledge what we have deserved, it's no contemptible mercy, nor to be slighted, to be freed from those evils which are so many ways incident to us, and which we have so well deserved, not to be stricken with Blindness or Deafness, not to be smitten with Distraction or Madness, not forsaken of Health and Friends, all outward Comforts; not driven to pinching necessities of Hunger, Thirst, Cold, and Nakedness, as many are. These privative mercies should amplify the goodness of our Redeemer to us, and make the thoughts of God more welcome. Not to want any Member of thy Body, nor Faculty of thy Soul, nor a very good portion of Food, Health and Friends especially, if they be Friends indeed, nor other Provision for a comfortable Life; and yet to want an Eye to look to the Fountain, nor to remember the Giver that deals with us so contrary to our deservings, is a fearful case and condition. The Church in her Captivity, when she was in the hands of cruel Tyrants and Oppressors, yet even in that condition, could find out a *Not* that did not a little affect his Heart with thankfulness. It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, *Lam. 3. 22.* As if she had said, we are in distress, but we might have been in Hell; we are cast down, but we might have been utterly cast off. A
Soul

Soul truly convinced of his sin and humbled, knows the value of such mercies as these. Not tormented with those acute Diseases that gives us no rest day nor night; not afflicted with the Stone or Gout, or Iliack Passion; not seized on with a hand of Judgment from Heaven; not visited with the Plague, or any other dreadful Sickness. What an Indictment made up of such Mercies, might be drawn up against one that blots God out of his Remembrance? And if mercies of this kind are such an obligation to this duty, what are the positive mercies of a whole life, yea, of a year, month, or but a day. It's hard to reckon up the kinds and sorts, unless we should insist upon meer generals, that comprehend numbers under them. Such as are Temporal, Spiritual, Personal or Relative, it's not very easie to reckon them up. The comforts of Life, Health to those that have it, Estate, Name, mercies of Food and Rayment, Friends, House, Recreation, Protection; but the particulars under these who can recite? Our relative mercies how various? Never a one relation but would puzzle our thoughts to muster up the mercies thereof, and give in the particulars; the good we do them, the good we receive of them, every sight of them, every enjoyment of their company, discourse, love to us, our love to them. In a word, All our comforts are theirs, and theirs reciprocally ours, and so each have the mercies twice over. See now whether we have brought the matter, and in what a wood we have lost our selves in. Thus it is if we count but for a day, but if we go further and reckon for the month or year, we shall find

no end. Who can count the Dust of *Jacob*? *Num.* 23. 10. or sum up the mercies he doth receive, which are like the Dust of the Earth; not for smallness, but for multitude. *David* observes them to come by whole loads, *Psal.* 68. 19. *Blessed be the Lord who daily loadeth us with his Benefits.* But our Spiritual Miseries are yet more, because they contain all our Temporals, so far as they refer to a Spiritual end, and how many more who can tell? How many mercies concur in our Redemption, Vocation, Justification, Sanctification? How many considerations may be fetch'd from the Author, from the meritorious cause, from the persons that do receive, from the instruments that do convey them, from the frequency and reiteration of the particulars; and from other circumstances of time and place, which would swell our Accounts beyond all possibility of Numeration? This is the first motive, the infinite mercies we receive should prompt us to, *this Remembrance.*

Secondly, Wouldst thou have God remember thee with compassion in thy greatest necessities, then remember him with affection now? It may be there are fearful days coming upon some of us, before our *final departure* and *solemn appearance*, before the Judge of all the World. What though the Cloud that hangs over this Nation be but the bigness of a mans hand, it may quickly grow bigger and blacker till it cover the face of the whole Heaven, and bring down a storm of heavier misery upon those that have escaped Judgment hitherto. There is nothing can fense a man from all possible Fears and Terrors if God forget us.

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Wouldst thou not be afraid of evil tidings; nor faint when the iniquities of thy heels compass thee about? Wouldst thou not be confounded in the day of adversity, when the Heaven frowns, the Sea roars, *Esay 24. 20. And the Earth shall reel to and fro and stagger like a drunken man, when the world shall be overturned, and the transgression thereof shall be heavy on it, and the hearts of wicked men shall fail them for fear.* Then keep alive such remembrance of him, as hath been hitherto commended. Then come what will, nothing shall drive thee to desperation, for the Lord God shall be thy confidence and with-hold thine heart from sinking, *Prov. 3. 26.* as well as thy foot from being taken. This a great Cardinal in this Nation, understood when it was too late; and therefore when a Messenger from *Henry 8.* brought him the tidings of his doom, and was sent to bring him away to Execution, he pitifully complained, *That if he had served God as faithfully as he had endeavoured to serve his Master, he had never met with such a reward.* As it is the top-stone, and the perfection of misery to be blotted out of Gods Remembrance, so it is a happiness worth a World to be Remembered by him. This supported *David* many a time, when he was in miserable distress, and brought to the greatest streights, when Friends forsook him, Enemies threatned him; *Saul* hunted him like a Partridge about the Mountains, and he was forced to flee from before his Face, and to take Shelter amongst the *Philistines*, whose Champion he had slain, and from whom he had little reason to expect any succour; and whilst he liv'd in banishment at *Ziglag*, even that was suddenly surprized by the
Ama-

Amalekites, and burnt with Fire; and his Wives and Friends were taken away Captives; and the People that were his only Guard, being provoked, spake of stoning him. But though all this had been enough to have broken the heart of another man, not acquainted with David's refuge, yet see how David bore up and supported himself, 1 Sam. 30. 6. And David was greatly distressed, for the People spake of stoning him, because the Soul of all the People was grieved, every Man for his Sons and for his Daughters. But David encouraged himself in the Lord his God. This helped Hezekiah to digest the proud message of the King of Assyria, and to spread the railing Letter before him, who he knew could put a Hook into Sennacherib's Nose, and turn him back, or else defend him against that Army that were grown so insolent by their Victories, 2 Chron. 32. And God remembred him, verse 21, 22. Yea, when Esaiab was sent to him to bid him put his House in order and prepare for death, it was Armour of Proof to him against the terror of death, that he could say, Remember now, O Lord, I beseech thee, how I have walked before thee in truth; and with a perfect heart, and have done that which is good in thy sight; which he could ne'r have done if God had not been highest in his Remembrance, Esay 38. 3. If thou beest one that canst drive out the thoughts of God in thy youthful, healthful, and more comfortable days, expect not that he should remember thee in distress. If whilst thou art surrounded with his mercies, thou wilt forget that he is gracious to thee; when thou art beset with misery and affliction, he will forget to be gracious to thee. Be wise now therefore, and take

take in these thoughts ; as thou takest in the Air every day , and other comforts which he sendeth thee , and lay them up as thy greatest treasure. These will sweeten the sowrest Cup , and gild over the bitterest Pill ; and God will certainly remember thee, if not to take away the evil, yet to take out the sting. *Ahasuerus* may forget *Mordecai*, and the Butler may be unmindful of *Joseph*, and the preserved City may not remember the poor man that saved it ; but God will not forget those that remember him. He will be thy refuge and strength , and a very present help in the time of trouble ; *Psal.* 46. 1. And then thou needst not fear , though the Earth be removed , and the Mountains be carried into the midst of the Sea ; though the Waters thereof roar and be troubled , though the Mountains shake with the swelling thereof, *ver.* 2, 3. Then though thy Flesh begins to fail thee, yet thy heart will not ; or if thy Flesh should fail thee and thy Heart also , yet God would remember thee and be the strength of thy hope and thy portion for ever. Thou mayst easily foresee the day when Sickneſs will break thy Body , and earthly Delights will forsake thee , and Death will be inexorable and take no nay : then if thou hast cherished this Remembrance of God, thou wilt dare to lay down thy Body in the Dust , and as certainly foresee the joyful re-union of thy Soul and Body , as now thou dost their uncomfortable dissolution. Wouldst thou not then be forgotten of God , when thy Friends and all the World will forget thee ? Then Remember him now. Yea, wouldst thou be content to go into the place of Forgetfulness , and to be forgot-

ten, as a dead man out of sight? Why, all this will not discourage thee, if thou hast this remedy at hand. But on the contrary, How unprepared is the Man that forgets God, for his eternal state? How loath to leave the Twig and fall into the Ocean? With what regret and reluctance, with what an aking, trembling Heart, doth he look upon Death; who can blame such a Man if he hang back, and dare not launch forth into Eternity? And therefore it's said in the *Proverbs*, *The wicked is driven hence*. How unwilling doth he bid farewell to his dear enjoyments? How loath to part with the Wife out of his Bosom, the Children out of his Arms? He cannot bear such a loss. Nothing is more dreadful to such an impudent man, than to look down from the mast of this Life into the ocean of Eternity. O what cold and clammy Sweats; what sad and dismal Representations, doth the thought of Death create in him! As ever thou wouldst hold up thy Head in Sickness, or any other Affliction, and die with comfort and keep thy Heart whole, come what will; then keep alive this Remembrance of God.

This is the second Motive.

Thirdly, Remember God, for nothing else is worthy thy Remembrance. (1.) Such a one as I am now speaking of, there's nothing here below that's worth an act of our Understanding or Will, that's worth a Thought or an Embrace, but as they lead to a more perfect Knowledge and Union, and are a means suited to our necessity, that cannot have any Knowledge worthy of God, with-
out

out his Works; nor see him without this Glass, whereby he hath represented himself to our weak capacity. All Knowledge begins first in sense; and we should never come to understand the things that are not seen, but by those which are seen. God therefore hath made the World as a School for us, where we must be trained up, and made fit for the higher instructions of his Word; and the several Creatures are the Alphabet, whereby we are to spell out the Nature and Perfections of God. What a shame is it then to let *sense* go before and no *Understanding* follow after. To pore upon the Letters, and not to mind the sense and meaning of them. To exercise an act upon the visible Creatures, without a following Act by way of inference and deduction to the invisible God? What folly, to dote upon the Letters, and not to regard the meaning of them, and to lose our understanding in a maze of insignificant things that stand for nothing, if they reach not the knowledge of him that animates all things, and is the end and signification of them. What is there in Man or any other Creature, that thou shouldst make an Idol of it, and that thou shouldst set it up in thine Heart, and prostrate thine Affections to it? Is there any thing that deserves the reputation of a being every way full and perfect, in which thou mayest *acquiesce*, but God? Yet if he have not the Remembrance I am pressing to, something else will strike in and supply his absence; and usurp thine Affections. And be it what it will besides, it is but a Reed or an Arm of Flesh that's got so high in thine esteem; and then thus saith the Lord, *Cursed be the Man that trusteth in Man,*

and maketh Flesh his Arm, and whose Heart departeth from the Lord. For he shall be like the Heath in the Desert, and shall not see when good cometh, Jer. 17. 5, 6. All-sufficiency, Immutability, and indefectible Fidelity, are proper to God alone. It's no wonder for the Sun to set and be eclipsed, as glorious a body as it is. It's no marvel if all Creatures prove Liars, Psal. 116. 11. and shew themselves untrusty and deceitful. As it is their nature to deceive, so it is our sin and folly to lean hard on them, and be deceived by them. Thou mayst as wisely expect that the Wind should always blow from the same quarter, and sit in the same corner, as that any created Being should afford thee constant help; and never shame thee. But the portion of *Jacob* is not like these changeable things. *Our Fathers trusted in thee* (saith the Prophet *David*) *and were delivered. They hoped in thee and were not confounded*, Psal. 22. 4, 5. Let him that is void of understanding run to something else, and remember it with greatest pleasure, and repose his trust in a lie, and adore a silly Man that can but promote him to Riches and Honour. Mark what will be the issue, may be, when thou art just expecting the fruit of sinful trust; his Breath goeth forth, here turneth to his Earth, in that very day his thoughts perish. May I not well say therefore, *Happy is he that hath the God of Jacob for his help, that remembreth the Lord his God*. He that is fond of any thing here below, and setteth his Heart upon it, and suffereth his Affections to brood over it, is like the Patridge that setteth upon Eggs and hatcheth them not, and in the end he shall certainly prove himself

himself a fool, *Jer.* 17. 11. His warm thoughts that sit upon vanity all the day long, shall never hatch and produce the thing he expected, nor any thing that will look like happiness, when his Judgment shall come to more maturity. Why then is God so seldom in thy thoughts, why art thou no more delighted in the Remembrance of him? Why doth he dwell no more in thy Meditations? Art thou willing to be deceived and labour in vain, and to lie down in frustration and disappointments? If thou couldst name any thing under Heaven that were not chargeable with a thousand Imperfections, and were not liable to the Moth and Rust. If thou couldst assure thy self that thy Friend will never prove perfidious, that thy Lovers will always bear thee the same Affection, which thou imaginest now they do. If Youth and Health, and Life, would last ten times longer than they are like to do, yet when the competition lies between God and them, it's folly and madness to prefer any thing in thy Remembrance before him.

I might here single out the things that are most attractive of Mens Affections, and have indeed the highest esteem and love in a Carnal Heart, and then produce the *several disparagements* they are liable to, when they are compared with an immutable Independant, and All-sufficient Being. But then I should too much digress. And so much by way of *Question*, to shame us and to stir us up to so excellent and necessary Duty.

But you will say, What is the best course to get and cherish such a worthy Remembrance of God, and to feed it up to a greater degree of Strength and Perfection?

To which I answer, That there are means.

1. *Proper*. To beget this Remembrance where it never was.

2. To recover it where it is sensibly lost.

3. To quicken it to a greater Energy and Life where it is but weak and faint.

2. *Common* to themall, and have an influence upon every one of these. I shall rather chuse to insist upon the more general and common Helps and Directions, and wave the more distinct handling of the *Question*, lest I should be too tedious.

The *Common Directions* which I shall propose are,

By way of { 1. *Consideration*.
2. *Exercise*.

Consider therefore { 1. *What a fearful and dangerous sin it is to forget God.*
2. *What a shame it is to be unmindful of him*
3. *What are the benefits of preferring God in our Remembrance before all other things.*

For the *First*, I have already shewed what a heinous and dangerous sin it is to forget God, from whence it may be fetch'd for our *Consideration*. I shall give a brief *Recapitulation*.

Consider then, what *Obligations* thou sin'st against, if thou shut God out of thy Remembrance.

I, On

1. *On God's part.*

1. He gave thee thy Faculties to this very end.

2. And hath purposely set Heaven and Earth before thee to exercise these Faculties, and to put thee in Remembrance of him.

3. He hath sent his Son to put thee in mind of him.

4. He hath given thee his Spirit, Word, and all his Ordinances, to awake thee to remember him. Think then what Gilt, the breach of all these Obligations on Gods part will bring upon thee, if yet thou shalt forget him.

Consider what Obligations also thou sinnest against. 2. *On thy own part.* Thou sinnest against

1. Thy solemn Vow. 2. Covenant. 3. Oath

4. Profession. If these particulars be taken into thy consideration, thou wilt not sure count it a *venial sin* to forget God, and consequently it will be a means to bring thee to the Remembrance I am directing to. Consider also, the danger as well as the guiltiness of this sin.

1. It may betray thee to all other sin and absurdity.

2. It will provoke God to forget thee in a way of mercy.

3. It will cause him to Remember thee in a way of Judgment. If thou art one that dost believe and wilt consider thus much, it will prepare thee for the duty we are now upon, and be a help to a worthy Remembrance of him. For every thing that hath the nature of a motive to a practical Duty, hath the nature of a means or help to the performance of the Duty. The Reason is, be-

cause it is a necessary means to any Duty, to bring the Will to a thorough Resolution. Now all motives are the most proper means to bring the Will to such a Determination.

So much for the first thing that we are to consider.

Secondly, Consider also what a shame it is to forget God, and to be unmindful of him. Hast thou no ingenuity?

1. Canst thou forget him that remembreth thee every hour?

2. Canst thou forget him in prosperity whom thou wilt remember in thy necessity?

3. Dost thou not blush to prefer empty, unsatisfactory and transitory things in thy Remembrance before God.

But these things I have already insisted on, and therefore do but now name them as matter of our consideration, as a second sort of motives, and therefore fit means to help on this Remembrance.

Thirdly, If thou wouldst be in the number of those that exalt God above all things in their Remembrance, then consider what *advantage* will accrue to thee by such a Remembrance. I know these may be also called motives, as *all means by way of consideration are*. But yet they are all distinct and different kinds of motives, and have their effect upon three several passions.

1. The first sort, taken from the consideration of the greatness and danger of the sin of not Remembering God, are rather to fright us from the sin of forgetfulness, than to draw us to the duty of Remembrance.

2. The second sort are intended to work upon
Ingenuity,

Ingenuity, where there is any, and to excite shame in those that neglect such a becoming duty

3. And the third sort, taken from the benefits and advantage of this Remembrance, are directly to excite Love and Desire, and hereby to attract the Heart to the performance of a work so beneficial.

I come now therefore to propose the *Benefits* that will follow such a worthy Remembrance of God, as a means to this duty.

First Consider, If thou art one that Remembrest God with the most prizing, valuing thoughts; thou art *translated from Death to Life*. If St. John make the predominant love of the Brethren to be so sure an evidence of this Translation, 1 John 3.14. *We know that we are passed from Death to Life, because we love the Brethren*. Then much more doth the sincere love of God give us full security, that we are thus advanced. But the predominant love of God is implied in this Remembrance as the essential part of it, according to the known Rule, words of Sense and Understanding in Morality, essentially involve Affections and Actions. (If they go alone) all moral Acts are incomplete) unless they be both in the understanding and will in the Mind and Heart. If therefore thou art one that thus remembrest God, thou hast this grand privilege, whose name is *Legion*, and contains such a number under it. Death is a name of terror, and sounds dreadful to all, whose Ears it hath not stop'd, and is the sum and abridgment of all that's either *hateful* or *fearful*. And therefore all the penalty that God threatneth for the breach of
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such a perfect Righteous Law, as he gave to Man, was comprized in the word *Death*. And if it be not enough to vindicate the Law from contempt of such as do but hear it, yet it will teach them (at least) not to despise it that feel it. And as *Death* is a Name pregnant with Dread and Horror; so *Life* is the most comfortable Sound, and carries all that's desirable in the Bowels of it. And it is put in Scripture to signify, 1. All Happiness, 2. Perpetuity. And therefore it was the only Sanction that God added to his Law, by way of Remuneration, *Do this and Live*. Where *Life* is opposed to the *Death* that is threatned to the Transgressors. As *Death* therefore is comprehensive of all Misery, so *Life* is a complication of all Happiness. And as it is put for all Felicity, so for Perpetuity, *Psal.* 56. 7. In his favour is *Life*, (1.) Perpetuity, as appears by the opposition in the former part of the verse. His Anger endures but a moment, that is, it's short, but in his Favour is *Life* (1.) It's lasting and perpetual. Now *Death* is of three sorts, opposed to a three fold *Life*, 1. *Natural*. 2. *Moral*. 3. *Metaphorical*. *Natural Death* is the privation of all sense. *Death Moral* is the privation of all Love in the Will to Vertue, and propension to Goodness, for want of which Love it is dead to all vertuous Life and Action, and feels no sweetness in them, because the principle of that Life is wanting. For *Love is the Principium Vite in morallibus*. Love is the principle of Life in the Moral, Spiritual, or gracious Life. And as *Natural Death* doth not only deprive the Body of all Sense and Motion, but renders it unfit for the Soul

Soul to dwell in and be united to, and so dissolves the union between these two. So Morally Death doth not ^{only} deprive the Soul of all gracious and virtuous Sense and Motion, but renders it unfit for the Spirit of true Vertue, Grace and Holiness to dwell in; and so there must needs follow a Divorce and Separation between them. And as in the Natural Life there is a Union between the Soul and Body, so in the Moral there is a Union between the Soul and God. *Death Metaphorical* is the privation of all the comfortable effects of Life, whether it be Natural or Moral, whilst bear Life doth still remain, and the presence of all those evils that may afflict or embitter it.

And all these are either { 1. *Temporal.*
2. *Eternal.*

From what hath been spoken for the explication of these two terms, *Life* and *Death*, you may perceive what a priviledge and unspeakable favour it is to be translated from Death to Life.

1. If thou Remembrest God, The sting of a Natural Death is pulled out, and though thou art not ~~forced~~ from the part of the penalty of sin, *freed* whereby the Body is deprived of all sense, and separated from the Soul, yet thou art delivered from that which is most terrible in Death. And the misery or Death that will follow after, and it is a comfortable passage for them that Remember God, to endless Joy and Happiness; and sometimes a welcome Messenger to them. They may truly say as *Agag*, 1 Sam. 15. 32. *The bitterness of Death is past.*

2. They

2. They are translated from the Death of Sin to the Life of Grace and Holiness, and are united unto God, and are disposed by Faith and Love to that Holiness, which is the Divine Perfection, and the way to the highest Happiness and Honour that the Heart of Man can wish or desire. Though this Life will be imperfect whilst we stay here. And if there be such pleasure in the Union between the Soul and Body, then there is much more in the Union between the Soul and God.

3. As Death is put for Misery and the bitter and uncomfortable effects of the endless Life to come, so they are passed from Death to Life. The Sentence of Death that God hath passed against sin, is so far revers'd. And as for the Miseries and Evils of this Life though materially, they may have more than other Men, yet as to the formal and most essential part of them, they feel them not so much as other Men, because they are allay'd and sweetned. 1. By the inward Peace and Comfort that God gives to those that Remember him. 2. By the benefit and advantage they get by those outward Sufferings. For as their outward Man is afflicted, so their inward man is renewed, strengthened and confirmed day by day, 2 Cor. 4. 16. For their light Affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for them a far more exceeding and eternal weight of Glory, even in the beginnings of it here, ver. 17. 3. It lessens their short and momentary sufferings, that by them they escape so much Temptation, and all the baits of sin are become the less taking.

If thou art one in whose Remembrance God is advanced above all other things, thou shalt not die,

die, but live and declare the works of the Lord, *Psal.* 118. 17. And though the Lord may chasten and correct thee, yet he will not give thee over unto Death, *ver.* 18. For God is the Fountain of Life, and in his Light thou shalt see Life, *Psal.* 36. 9. O what a Mercy is it to be delivered from the power of Death and Darkness, and to be translated into the Kingdom of his *dear Son*, where thou shalt grow up from one degree of Life to another, till thou come to everlasting Life, *Col.* 1. 13. At thy first entrance into this Kingdom, Death is sentenced, and some execution is done upon every sort of Death, which will be perfected, as this remembrance of God grows up to perfection in thee. *O Death I will be thy Plague, O Grave I will be thy Destruction*, *Hos.* 13. 14. Which as it was verified of Christ personally understood, so it is of Christ mystically understood. (1.) As Christ overcame Death in his Person, so every true Believer (such are all and only they that have God in their Remembrance) hath gotten some conquest over Death, which shall grow up to a full Victory; and therefore *Paul* in the Name of the whole Church, doth acknowledge this mercy; *Thanks be to God that giveth us the victory, thorough our Lord Jesus Christ*, *1 Cor.* 15 5, 7. Whilst the wicked forgetters of God are dead in trespasses and sins, and dead to all soul and solid Joy and Comfort, and designed to an eternal death. Thou that thinkest upon God, and remembrest his Love in Christ, art entred into a state of Life, and hast such a Promise, that contains more in it than all the rich *Indian Mines*. Because he hath set his Love upon me, *With long life*
will

will I satisfie him, and shew him my Salvation, Psal. 91. 16. If thou didst but know what a treasure is hid in thy Remembrance, thou wouldst throw out every thing of thy Memory and Heart, that hinders this Remembrance of God.

This one priviledge of being translated from Death to Life, is big with a number more.

1. It implies that thou art reconciled to God, and he is at peace with thee, and thou needest no more to fear him as thine Enemy. All his Attributes of Power, Justice, Holiness, Vengeance, Majesty, that sound so terrible to the forgetters of God, do but the better secure thee of thine Happines.

2. It implies also thy present Justification, in title of Law. God hath acquitted thee by the law of Grace and Act of the Gospel, from the guilt of sin, and dissolved the Obligation to condemnation. Who can lay any thing to thy charge if God absolve thee? Who can do thee any hurt when Christ is become thy Advocate? *Rom. 8.33.*

3. With this mercy doth coneur the mercy of Adoption and Sonship. It's no small Honour to be one of his menial Servants, but to be a Son, yea, a Heir, is a priviledge not easily valued and understood.

4. The gift of the Spirit to dwell within thee, is here also implied, to mortifie all sin, and to work all gracious habits that may fit thee for a state of Glory. In a word,

5. All real and relative Grace, so far as is ne-

cessary to Salvation, is thine, either in { *Title.*
{ *Possession.*
 1. The

1. The Righteousness of Imputation is thine, whereby thou art made fit for Pardon; and the Righteousness of Implantation is thine, whereby thou art made fit for his Love and Complacency, and sweetest Communion with him.

Secondly, If thou art one that Rememberest God, all things shall co-operate and conspire for thy good. Every Age, every state and condition of Life, every Place and Company, every Change and Alteration in the World, Prosperity and Adversity, Friends and Enemies, Health and Sickness, Honour and Dishonour; every Relation thou art plac'd in, shall help forward thy Joy and Felicity; and some Foundation God is laying in every one of these; whereupon to superstruct this Happiness and build that Joy upon it that shall never end. O how great are the Privileges of one that Remembereth God, whom he doth visit and continually comfort and rejoyce with refreshig Consolations! To whom he openeth when they come to him with desire, and doth embrace when they cast themselves on him; whom he is teaching and shewing the pleasure that strangers intermeddle not with. But were this all, they would be miserable, in comparison of what they now are. How sweet are his very Delays, Frowns. and the Chastisements of his Rod! His Estrangements, Threatnings, and the signs of his Displeasure, dreadful to the Wicked, but sweet to them that have his special Grace, to make their advantage of them, are in the mean while supported under them. I know they are sad to them, and cause great thoughts of Heart; but having the root of the matter

matter in them, *Job* 19. 28. And being forewarned by the Word of God, that thus it will sometime be with his dearest Children, and directed what to do in such times of Mourning; and knowing, that they shall not be tempted above their strength. These considerations recommend Sufferings and Afflictions to them, and make them far more desirable to them than the most splendid Pomp and Prosperity of those that forget God. As all the Mirth and Pleasures of wicked men, are preparing them for Misery, and would be dreadful to their thoughts, if they did but see what they all contribute to their eternal shame. So all is contrary in an honest and pure hearted Believer; not only the smiles, but the angry looks of God are sweet to his Apprehensions, not as they are signs of his displeasure, but as they help him forward in the hatred of sin, and mortifie his Affections to the Pleasures here below. I know the Anger of God is not directly desirable to any Person, but the sanctified fruits of it are desirable. And some little of it, when sin (that would otherwise undo us) makes it necessary, and it is mingled with a greater proportion of Love, and the Soul is disposed by Grace to tremble under it, and to be rid of it upon any terms.

Consider therefore thou that Remembrest God, Is it not an unvaluable comfort to fore-know, that all thy Trouble and Sorrows shall befriend thee, and that the leanest pasture thou canst be put in, shall feed thee up to everlasting Joys; when on the other side, those that forget God, though they fare deliciously every day, and are gotten into the
richest

richest pastures, and have the desire of their carnal hearts, yet they are but fattening themselves for the slaughter; and who would envy a fat Sheep or Hog that fares a little better, and is preparing for the Shambles? Nay, who would envy a *Lobworm* in a fat Dunghil? ^{That which} ~~They feed on~~ wicked men ^{feed on} makes them so fat and merry; it is but Dung and Filth in comparison of that which a Soul mindful of Good feeds upon. Methinks that place should sound dreadful to one that prospereth in the World, and doth not remember God., *Psal. 92. 7.* The two verses that go before it ushers it in, and that follows after in fearful pomp and state. *O Lord, how great are thy Works! and thy Thoughts very deep. A brutish man knoweth not, neither doth a fool understand this. When the wicked spring as the Grass, and all the workers of Iniquity do flourish; it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.* And we may say as well on the other side, that God is as wonderful in his thoughts toward such as are mindful of him, though a Fool understand not. That when the humble Believer, in whose thoughts God in Christ dwelleth uppermost, withers as the Grass, and fades like the green Herb; it is that he may flourish for ever. If thou art trod upon thou shalt grow the better. Thy necessities shall cause thee to make more haste, and get nearer to the Fountain that is opened; to the eternal praise of Gods Mercy, for such needy ones. All thy miseries shall but the more illustrate the Glory of his Compassion toward thee, when refuse sailest thee, and none careth for thy Soul. Many a one had liv'd and died in perpetual obscurity,

whose names are a rich perfume in the Church of God, thorough their Sufferings and Afflictions, which have made them the more famous, and embalm'd their Memory.

When the ways of a Man please the Lord, he can and will, in one sense or other, make his very Enemies to be his Friends; (1.) Their hatred shall be turned into love; or if it do continue still, God shall turn their very hatred and enmity to the greater advantage of those that are mindful of him. This made *Paul* to boast in his Infirmities, Necessities and Tribulation, 2 *Cor.* 11. 30. What if thou art poor and necessitous, if the Lord remember thee? What if thou hast no Friends on Earth, if thou hast one in Heaven? What if thou art destitute of Health it self, the greatest Earthly Blessing? if thou art one that remembrest God, it shall turn to thine advantage. If thou hast God in thy Remembrance thou hast all; for he will make every state and condition serve thy turn. What if thou art a Servant, if God be thy Master? If thou hast nothing to recommend thee unto Men, if thou hast this Grace I am pressing to, to recommend thee unto God, thou shalt be more a gainer than if thou hadst had Dominion in the World, and all the Paint and Varnish that would set thee off to the Eye of Men. Thy Temptations, Reproach, Sufferings of every kind, and thy very Prosperity and Wordly Happiness, which for the most part is such a preparative to Destruction, shall be like the Dew and Sun-shine to thee, and make thee more fruitful and ripen thy Graces, if thou art one that hast God always in thy Remembrance.

Thirdly,

Thirdly, If thou art one that remembreſt God, as I have expreſſed, thou haſt the Key to unlock all the Mercies of God, and to open the rich and moſt rareſt Treasures of Divine Grace, and to get the very deſire of thy Heart; I mean, thou mayſt come with Faith and Confidence to the Throne of Mercy, and open thy very Heart to him, who hath an Ear for all thy Requeſts. *The ſecrets of the Lord are with them that fear him, and he will ſhew them his Covenant,* *Pſal. 25. 14. and Pſal. 37. 4. Delight thy ſelf in the Lord, and he ſhall give thee the deſires of thy heart. and Jam. 5. later clause 16. v. The effectual fervent Prayer of a Righteous Man availeth much.* Now to fear the Lord, to remember him, to delight in him, are but ſeveral Deſcriptions of a Righteous Man and Believer. Thou canſt not have God in thy Mind and Heart, but thou wilt fear him, love him, delight in him in ſome degree, think on him, truſt in him in the way that he hath directed, and then thou art a Believer, and a Righteous Perſon in the Goſpel ſenſe, though not in the ſenſe of the Law, that requires perfect Obedience. It was ſaid of *Luther*, that he could do what he would with God by Prayer. If God be promoted in thy Heart, as high as he was in *Luth.* thou ſhalt prevail with him as much as ever *Luth.* did. I know thou haſt no ground from the word to expect that God ſhould ſatiſſie thy deſires in temporal things, when they will not conſiſt with the welfare of thy Soul. But every deſire that is honourable to God to grant, and profitable to thy Soul to receive, thou ſhalt have. And when he denies thee what thou doſt expreſs, he will give what thou doſt imply and mean. When he grant-

eth not thy particular Request, he will give thee thy general Request, whatsoever thou askest, it's happiness that thou meanest, that's the general intent and meaning; and this he will fulfil, though not always in the same method, it may be, that thine own Wisdom suggesteth; he will give thee money or money worth. Thou shalt have thy desire in kind or value; yea, a frequent Remembrance of God will teach thee to pray so as thou shalt prevail; and the knowledge of his Attributes and Perfections, which the Remembrance of God doth imply, will make thee so ingenious as to ask nothing that shall cross the Wisdom, Justice, or Holiness of God, or be the least prejudicial to the merciful design of thy Salvation.

O what a priviledge is it to have such an open free access to him, that can strangely turn things about when it pleaseth him, and is wonderful in Counsel and mighty in Working, *Esay. 28.* 29. with a promise to be heard; to plead with God and get the Blessing for thy Self, for thy Relations; and for the Land of thy Nativity; and by this means to be one of the Props and Pillars of the Nation, of which thou art a Member. This is an Honour indeed, and an unvaluable Mercy, which yet thou shalt partake of, in that degree and measure as thou dost Remember him.

Fourthly, To Remember God is the ready way to entail the Blessing of Heaven and Earth upon thy Seed and Posterity. Children speed ordinarily according to their Parents interest, or want of interest in God. Those that die in Infancy, it's more than probable that they speed
according

according as their Parents, or those that have the nearest interest in them, are in Covenant with God or out of Covenant. And those that live beyond an Infants state, have cause to count amongst the greatest of their early Blessings, that they have either one or both Parents that are true Believers, especially where the Faith of their Parents is gotten up to some degree of Eminency. I would not intimate that the Lord doth never shew special love and mercy to the Posterity of the Wicked, nor that he doth always impart saving Grace to the Children of the godly. But I believe it will prove a rare case, if one instance can be produced, that all the Children of Believers (if they have several) are finally forsaken of God, and denied his saving Grace; yea, many times they are all remembred. It is the Argument that *Peter* useth to perswade Faith and Repentance to his hearers; in the first Sermon which he preached after Christs Assention, and the Descent of the Holy Ghost, that by this means Parents would bring their Children to participate in Gospel-mercy with themselves, *Acts 2. 39, Repent and be Baptized every one of you, in the Name of Jesus Christ, for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost. For the Promise is to you and your Children.* And it hath the most general testimony of the soundest Writers, that the Faith of the Parents is the condition of the Childrens right to Baptism. The Profession of it in the Court of Men; the Possession of it in the Court of Heaven. * But be it how it will, I am

* See the Reverend Mr. Baxters *Dispu. of right to Sacrament.*

sure it's a doleful condition to be the Child of wicked Parents, that forget God; and a mercy better than the biggest Portion can be left them to be the Seed of Parents that Remember him. Thus saith the Lord, *&c. Fear not, O Jacob, my Servant; for I will pour my Spirit upon thy Seed, and my Blessing upon thine off-spring*, Esa. 44. 3. And as the special Promise was made to Isaac, so even *Ismael* sared the better for being *Abraham's* Seed. And as it is threatned in one of the Prophets, that the Seed of evil doers shall never be Renowned; so the Posterity of those that Remember God, are the most likely to be Remembered, even in this Life, and to be famous in their Congregation; Men of Renown, *Numb. 16. 2*. I do not mean for their worldly Pomp and Splendor, but for their Grace, Wisdom, and Usefulness to the World. To which sometime, such a measure of these outward Blessings are added; as may make their Grace more resplendent, and them more serviceable to him, that will most eminently reward it. If therefore your own Bowels are dear to you, and you desire that your Posterity should be blessed here, and had in Eternal Remembrance hereafter; advance God in your Remembrance.

Lastly, This Exercise of thy Thoughts and Affections in the Remembrance of God, is thy greatest Happiness, as well as thy greatest interest; I mean, it will yield thee the highest Pleasure as well as the highest Profit. I know to the ignorant, that have no competent knowledge of God, and such as are unwonted to these thoughts, and have their Affections buried in the World, and are

are loaden with divers Lusts; no work is more unpleasant, nothing that they will more decline; Light it self is unpleasant to a sore and distempered Eye; but those that are pretty well acquainted with the amiable Nature and Perfections of God, and with such Thoughts and Meditations of him, as will amount to a worthy Remembrance of him, would not be untaught this Art for all the Pleasures which the World can supply to them. These are the most reviving, these are the most comforting, these are the most satisfying Thoughts. These are the most illuminating, instructing, perfecting Thoughts. These are the Thoughts that best improve our present Comfort and our future Hopes. From all these Heads, I might particularly and distinctly shew, how the sincere Remembrance of God doth make way for the greatest Pleasure, viz. In that it doth, 1. Clear and perfect the Understanding. 2. Purifie and rejoyce the Heart. 3. Revive the Spirit, and actuate it to greater Life, and Life is sweet. 4. In that it doth quiet and satisfie the very Soul. 5. Multiply and improve our present Comforts. 6. And our future Happiness. All these ways and many other, doth this Remembrance of God contribute to our immediate Pleasure and Happiness. That Soul must needs abound most with Life and Joy, and Pleasure, that hath most frequent access to the Fountain of all Life and Pleasure, who enjoy themselves more than they (if other things concur) that are most under the power and command of such thoughts? Such as these have their Hearts frequently filled with Laughter, and their Tongues

with Rejoycing, *Psal.* 126. 2. Hence those unimitable strains of *David*, so frequent in the *Psalms* *I will sing unto the Lord as long as I live, I will sing praise unto my God, whilst I have my being. My Meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord;* *Psal.* 104. 33, 34. The more bright and glorious the Object is upon which the thoughts do dwell, the more it doth exhilarate and refresh. In a word, The more God is in thy Remembrance, the more of Content and substantial Joy thou shalt feel in thy Heart. So much for the means by way of consideration to help forward in this duty.

I now come to the means by way of Exercise, or the more practical Directions.

And these are either more positive, and such as directly concern the Duty, or else *negative*, and such as comprize the hinderances which are to be carefully avoided. And as these are first in practice so they shall be first in the directions.

First, If you would get the pleasure of these Thoughts into your Heart, you must not allow yourselves to live in any known sin whatsoever. because such sin is of an oblivious nature, and will extinguish the Memory of God. The love and voluntary entertainment of an Enemy and Traytor, will not consist with the Love and Loyalty we owe to God, and which a worthy Remembrance doth imply. Even Men will question your Love and Friendship, and take you for a double dealer, and a false hearted dissembler, if you take an utter Enemy of theirs into your Fellowship, and use him as your Intimate and Companion. And though it may consist with Friendship to fall
into

into the company of one that is an Enemy to your Friend, now and then, when it is not your choice and seeking, but surprize, or some other reason, drew you into his company, not any special love to, or complacency in his Person; and you are glad when you have an opportunity to be rid of such a Guest; yet you plainly violate such Love and Friendship, and are like to lose all interest in your Friend, if you chose his known Adversary for your allowed ordinary Companion. And as Love will not consist with such allowance and tolleration of that which is destructive of the thing or person which you love; so much less is Loyalty and true Subjection consistent with wilful and allowed Contradiction to the command of him that hath just Rule and Authority over us. A discret Master will not take him for a Servant but for a Rebel, that will ordinarily oppose and cross his Just and Righteous Command. Neither will a Parent that doth not dote, take that for an obedient Child that lives in the constant violation of a reasonable Command. And thus it is in all Government here on Earth; and there can be no true Subjection where there is such perpetual Contradiction in any one particular that falls within Bond and Obligation; and is plain Duty. Though the case is otherwise, if the point be disputable, and it is no Rebellion, if any one case there be, 1. No Command. 2. No right to Command, if a Servant does that to which he believes he hath no contrary Command; or humbly refuseth that which his Master hath no right to command him; his Credit is still good notwithstanding, in any mans account that judgeth Right.

Righteous Judgment. I know it argues a **Rebellious Inclination**, and some degree of **Disloyalty**, to question that **Command** where it's plain and evident; yet where it's certain we have no **Command** from God, it's as certain that we are under no **Obligation**. But there is a deeper taint of **Rebellion in the Heart**, and more of enmity to God, that lives in the constant breach and violation of a known Duty; and allows himself in the practice of that which he knows God is displeased with. This will not suffer him to live in the Remembrance of God, whom he doth daily provoke. If you are therefore such as can live constantly in known sin, you will thrust all thoughts of God out of your mind, as those which will but create fear and terror in you. But if you have a sincere (though not a perfect respect) to all Gods Commands, you may take Comfort and Pleasure in the Thoughts and Remembrance of God, though you do fail if you allow it not, but oppose your sin and confess it, and pray and strive against it; this will consist with the Love of God, which must be in the Heart that will worthily Remember him.

Secondly, As you must in the *General* resist all known Sin, so in *Particular*. Ignorance, or want of the knowledge of God, is an utter Enemy to this Remembrance, and therefore must be carefully avoided. Can a Man think that which he hath no knowledge of, and love where he sees no Beauty? and obey he knows not whom? nor why? He that knows not the Holy Nature of God, and what a Perfection and Happiness it is to be like him; yea, what an absolute necessity

cessity there lies upon every man to be like him ,
 if he will be happy , must make haste and get a
 cure for such Ignorance , or else he can never per-
 form the Duty we are upon. If you know not
 that you are indebted to God for all that you
 have ; that he gave you your Being and Rea-
 son , and expects Obedience , and will judge
 you according to your present Life and Conver-
 sation ; and that he doth spy out the thoughts
 of the Heart , and knows all your Imaginations.
 If you know not what bowels of Compassion
 are in him , and how much he taketh pleasure
 in your welfare , and what course he hath taken
 to bring it to pass. If you know not what Christ
 hath suffered for Sin and Sinners , that God
 might pardon it , without any Dishonour to his
 Justice and Holiness , if the Sinner do repent
 and beg mercy , you can never Remember
 God aright , and therefore Ignorance is fearfully
 threatned in Scripture , as the Mother of all Un-
 godliness. And the Prophet *Esay* complains of
 this sin in the Jews , and pronounces a heavy
 Sentence on them for it , *Esay. 27. 11*: *It is*
a People of no understanding (saith he) *what then ?*
therefore he that made them will not have mercy ,
and he that formed them will shew them no favour.
 If you love your selves , and have any compassion
 for your own Souls , or do believe a Life to
 come , take heed of this sin , for without know-
 ledge the Soul cannot be good , *Prov. 19. 2*. There
 are so many and excellent Books that are fitted
 to the cure of this Distemper , that will shame
 this sin one day , and leave it without all ex-
 cuse. The truths that are necessary to Salva-
 tion,

tion; are so few and so plain, and so agreeable to the very light of Reason, and are pressed so much in the writings of so many, that he or she that can but read, cannot miss instruction, yea, they that cannot read) though their case be sad) yet they cannot want instruction if they will go for it, to almost every Church about them, or to their knowing Neighbours, and desire to be instructed. It's one of these two or both that undoes all the World, ^{either} an uncatechised Head, ^{or} an unmortified Heart. He that hath an honest Heart and a willing Mind, cannot want the knowledge that is necessary to Salvation; and wo to them that want this knowledge, for the Lord Jesus shall shortly be revealed from Heaven in flaming Fire, to take Vengeance on all that *know not God*. Shun Ignorance therefore, for he that knows not God cannot Remember him.

Thirdly, Flee Inconsideracy, for next to Ignorance this is the great impediment to this Remembrance and your own Happiness: Wherefore hath God given thee a Faculty to consider, and bestowed Reason on thee? Wherefore hath he set his Word and Works before thee? Doth he not mean to draw forth thy thoughts thereby, that thou mayst consider and reap the benefit, and give God the Glory? The most concerning weighty truths will do no good, and never affect thy Heart unless they be considered. Though you know and believe that God is the Spring-head from whence all your Mercies come, and that he hath redeemed you by his Son, and offereth to save you by his Spirit and Word, if you will but come unto Christ by Faith; yet if you

you consider not these things, no wonder if you make light of Christ, no wonder if you trample his Blood under your Feet and go your way, one to his Farm another to his Merchandize, and take the happiness the World will afford you, though it be at the Plow and Cart, in rising early and sitting up late; and in the hardest Toyl and Labour, rather than believe in the Son of God, or spend an hour in Prayer or reading the Word of God, that you may Remember him that hath made all things, and to whom all the World is but a shadow. Though you believe that the wicked shall be turned into Hell, and all that forget God; and that all that die in impenitency shall be sentenced to the Eternal Flames; yet if you shut these thoughts out of your minds and will not consider them, what wonder if you live as if there were no such things. What though you believe that the hour is coming in which all that are in the Grave shall hear the Voice of the Son of God and come forth, they that have done good to the Resurrection of Life, *John* 5. 28, 29. yet if you consider not what God hath prepared for them that love him, no wonder if you be weary and faint in the way. Consideration openeth the Eye and softneth the Heart, and maketh you feel the force and power of truth. If you shut your Eyes by inconsideration, the most taking Objects will never move you, and the most fearful sight will never fright you. Though it is impossible to perswade a Man whose Eyes are open to run into the Fire or Water, or throw himself down a Precipice, yet ^{one that goes} ~~going~~ *that goes* on and shuts his Eyes, will not long escape one mischief

mischief or another; you will go¹ with the Ox to the slaughter, and with the Fool to the correction of the Stocks, if you *consider* not that it is for your Life. O how many are now roaring in the unquenchable Fire, that would never have come there if they had but considered! O how many forget God and their own Souls day after day, that would not, that could not do so if they did but seriously consider. What madness hath filled the Heart of Man that he should be backward to nothing more than to consider whilst it may do him good, and when every thought will cut his Heart he will follow the work close and do nothing else, but reflect upon and bewail his misery. As consideration if it be timely followed and wisely managed, is the best and usual instrument on mans part, to bring a foolish, careless, senseless sinner to his wits again. So Consideration when it is too late, is the greatest instrument to put him quite out of his Wits, and to fill his Heart with raging down-right madness for ever. You will not be perswaded to consider now what you are doing, and whither you are going, and why God hath made you, and given you life and time; but mark what a Prophet tells you, that cannot be deceived (*Isa. 23. 20.* *In the latter days you shall consider it perfectly;*) and no tongue shall be able to perswade you to the contrary. As corrupt Nature is backward to nothing more than consideration whilst the day of mercy lasteth; so he is prone to nothing more after this day is past and gone; and as he will not *consider* now, so he shall not then avoid it; Lord when thy hand is lifted up they will not see, but they shall see and
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be ashamed, *7th Ju. 26. 11.* If you would therefore Remember God to your comfort and not to your terror, shun *Inconsideracy*, and fill your Hearts with matter from the daily observation of Gods Word and Works to feed your consideration. I might insist more largely upon the *hindrances*, and shew you what impediments; 1. *Pride*, 2. *Discontent*, 3. and *Worldliness*, are to this Remembrance; but I wave them and proceed to the *positive Directions*.

First, If you would get a comforting, worthy Remembrance of God into your Heart, then get your Heart deeply affected with the mischief that sin hath done you, and the love and compassion that Christ hath shewed to you. If you understand not what God made you at the *first*, and for what an honourable, high and noble end; and how much your Nature is distorted (and though you could not help it that you took such a perverse Nature from your Parents, yet you have too much given your *Actual Consent* in that you have not bewailed and lamented your case in any considerable measure to this day) If you know not what ever sin deserveth, nor see so much evil in it as that it should deserve the penalty that God hath threatned, nor consider what number of sins you have been guilty of, and to what a degree of guilt they have been aggravated by you, and what a necessity there was that you should perish everlastingly, unless God should deny himself, which the Apostle tells us he cannot do, *1 Tim. 2. 13.* and suffer his Justice, Wisdom and Holiness, to lie under disgrace and reproach, if Christ had not undergone the wrath
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of God, and so stop'd the mouth of Justice; vindicated the Law of God, made Transgression odious, and engag'd to bring the sinners to Repentance, that should partake of the Fruits of his Death, and to humble them in the sense of their former wickedness, and to restore the Image of God in them again, and to bring them to the love of his service again, which before their Repentance and Conversion they do naturally hate and abhor. If you do not understand what Christ hath done for you already, and what he will do by his Spirit to the changing of your Hearts. If you will but consent and take him for your Lord and Saviour, you can never know that the love of Christ is so wonderful and obliging; and if you leave Christ out of your Remembrance, you can have no thoughts of God, that will yield you solid comfort.

Secondly, If you would Remember God aright, endeavour to bring on others to this Remembrance, and to set the motives before them, that may well move the most backward Heart, and recover the most forgetful to this duty; whilst you are putting others in mind, you will revive and strengthen the like disposition in your self, and perform an acceptable service to God, whereby you will increase his love to you, and consequently the Remembrance of him will be more sweet to you. *Restore to me, saith David, the joy of thy Salvation, and uphold me by thy free Spirit; then will I teach Transgressors thy ways, and Sinners shall be converted to thee*, Psal. 51. 12, 13. The more any Grace is exercised, the more it will gather fervour and intention. To perswade others

thers to this Remembrance, is to reduce thine own Remembrance of him into practice; whilst thou art teaching others thou canst not but learn thy self. Whilst thou art bending others to Remember the Fountain of all Perfection and Goodness, thou wilt feel thine own Heart and Affections more byassed toward him. Who can infuse Life and Spirit into another, and not grow vigorous himself? *David* knew that he could not but thrive himself if others were gainers by him; and therefore he invites others, *Psal. 34. 11. Come my Children hearken unto me, and I will teach you the fear of the Lord.* There are certain opportunities and seasons, if they be wisely observed, when either Affection or Affliction hath made way, in which two or three words fetched from the Heart; may work upon the Heart of one that hath shamefully forgot God all his days, and recover him to this Remembrance. And if God shew thee so much mercy, and make thee such an instrument, the thoughts and memory of God that hath shewed thee so much favour, will be dearer to thee.

3. If thou wouldst remember God with pleasure remember those that are in misery, whither of Soul or Body with compassion. For this will make you like to God, who comforteth the sorrowful, and bindeth up the broken in Heart, and raiseth up those that are bowed down, *Psal. 146. 8.* And the more there is of likeness, the more there will be of Love and Remembrance. A hard and unmerciful Heart is so unlike to God, that it will strive to forget him, lest the tender Boweis of God should upbraid his cruel and unrelenting Heart. It's a
 K disposition

disposition highly pleasing to God, and a blessed imitation of him, to comport with those that lie under any distress or misery, especially those that are ready to faint and sink under their burdens; and it's Justice as well as Mercy so to do. Is it not just that thou shouldst cast an Eye of compassion and pity upon those on whom the Hand of God is fallen, heavy, either in Soul or Body? especially when thou art as obnoxious as they, and God hath spared you on purpose, and set their miseries before you to move your Bowels? *Shouldst thou not have compassion on thy fellow Servant, as God hath shewed pity unto thee*, Mat. 18. 33. And kindness with tender heartedness is one part of the new Nature which Christ came to restore, and therefore the Apostle doth endeavour to stir up the *Ephesians*, Eph. 4. 32. and also the *Collosians*, Col. 3. 12. *Put on therefore as the Elect of God, Holy and Beloved, Bowels of Mercy and Kindness.*

And as the miserable state and condition of Mens Souls, doth most eminently bespeak this Affection, so it's Cruelty to overlook their other Miseries, and not to take them into our consideration. 1. To get our Hearts affected, that we may truly pity them. 2. And earnestly pray for them. And 3. Contribute what other help we are able, to make them as happy as our selves. There is a selfishness too natural to every one of us, that will not let us hear on this Ear, and therefore we are so careless in this publick Calamity, what others suffer so we are

are free: How senseless are we under such a hand as is fallen upon many parts of this Nation? And therefore we are so unthankful for our Health and Preservation, when God hath required the Lives of so many of our Brethren from them? What a fearful, woful Scourge, do the City feel and heavily groan under? How do the Inhabitants of that one proud and glorious City, reply to one another in Sighs and Groans, and bitter Out-cries and Lamentations, where whole Families are smitten and blasted, and Children and Parents pledge one another in Tears, and drink the Wine of Astonishment; where Nearest Friends are made the Executors of the Calamities of their departed Friends; and it's taken and accounted for a mercy to die first, lest the miserable Calamities of Wife and Children, and their successive departure, should be more than one single Death. *Their Eyes affect their Heart*, Lam. 3. 51. But we as we see not their Miseries, so neither do we feel them as we ought, as thorough the goodness of God we are more safe than they, so we are more secure, and too void of any Christian sense of this common Calamity. Alas! alas! they have the dreadful sound and noise of this Judgment in their Ears, and see Death continually before their Eyes; but we hear but at a distance, and therefore are not stricken with the terror thereof. The report of this Murdering-piece that God hath shot off in many places of this Nation, is faint and dead before it comes to our sense. But the less we see this Misery and hear these Cries, the more we should supply this merciful defect

by consideration. If we saw or heard, it may be we should not need many thoughts to fetch tears from our Eyes, and Sighs from our Hearts. Desolencie and want of this compassion, shews a fat and brawny Heart. Though we are not to indulge this Affection so far as to make it guilty of siding against God, as it will be apt to do, if it proceed no farther and do not serve a higher end. The end of this Affection is to make way for Compassion toward their Souls, and to bewail and beg pardon for their Sins, that have brought this misery on them.

1. *Objection. Observation.*

I have done with the *First Observa^{tion}*, which the Texts suggesteth to us, (viz.) *That forgetfulness of God is a fearful and dangerous sin, and exposeth such as are guilty of it to the unavoidable Wrath of God.*

2. *Objection. Observation.*

I come now to the *Second Observation*, (viz.) *That Consideration is one of the principal instruments on our part, to bring us to the Remembrance of God at first, and to prevent forgetfulness afterwards; or to recover us out of that degree of Forgetfulness, into which we may possibly fall. Two Suppositions.* 1. Here it is supposed, 1. That we are all born into the World in a state of Forgetfulness; and that Naturally God is not minded by us; he is not in all our thoughts. (1.) By a usually Hebraism in never a one of them,

them, so worthily regarded as he ought, *Psal.*
 104. Oblivion goes before Remembrance in
 every Child of *Adam*. I know Forgetfulness
 doth suppose that we either had or should have
 had, the habit of which this is the priva-
 vation: We cannot be said in any propriety of
 Speech, to forget that which we never did, or
 never ought to have Remembred. As a thing
 can never be said to be blind which never saw
 nor ought to have seen: But it is our misera-
 ble and unhappy case and condition, that we
 were made to Remember God, and to give
 him the highest of our Praises, and had a Na-
 ture fit for so high and noble Service, and yet
 are born into the World in a gross ignorance of
 God, with a Nature that continually disposeth
 us to forget him, and to entertain the most
 contemptible Vanities into our Thoughts and
 Affections before him. This is the Disease that
 Christ came to Cure, with the greatest pity and
 compassion to Mankind; which it is the intent
 of his Word and Cross and Spirit, and all his
 Ordinances to remove; and which is cured in a
 sincere and prevailing measure, in all that shall
 see his Face to their comfort hereafter. And
 although Infants are not actually guilty of this
 sin (as neither they are of any other sin) be-
 cause they are not come to the use of their Rea-
 son, and therefore cannot perform any act pro-
 perly vertuous or sinful, yet they have an obli-
 vious Disposition, a Seed in them that will bring
 forth this cursed Fruit, when they are capable:
 But for those that have pass'd an Infants state,
 and are grown up to the use of Reason, there's

nothing that they remember and think on less than God.

Secondly, It's here supposed, that after any are recovered by Christ, and awakened by his Word and Spirit to a due Remembrance of God, they may fall back into such a degree of Forgetfulness again, as that they may question whether ever they had a heart truly mindful of him; though I believe they shall never totally and finally fall into Forgetfulness, nor be forgotten of Christ, if they be in the number of the Elect. And therefore, though Christ commends the Church of *Ephesus* for her Faith and Patience, yet he is said to have somewhat against her, because she had left her Love, *Rev. 2. 4.* And she is warned to remember whence she is fallen, and to repent and do her first works, *ver. 5.*

These two particulars are evidently supposed in this last Proposition, which I am now to prosecute; and that Consideration of God, his Word and Works, is a necessary Remedy on our part, to cure our hereditary Forgetfulness, and bring us to the Remembrance I have been pleading for, and to recover us after any Relapse:

And that for these Reasons,

First, Because a Man can never come to the Remembrance of God till his Heart be sincerely affected with those truths that such a Remembrance doth pre-suppose; but this can never be done without consideration. There's nothing that's absent or Spiritual, that can affect the
Heart

Heart, and get that Fort, unless it be led in by Consideration, that's the Eye of the Soul; and 'tis the Eye only that can affect the Heart. There's nothing that can affect the Body, or move the Bodily Passions, that is not first apprehended by some Bodily Sense, that is, not seen or heard, or perceived, by some other sense. Now Consideration supplies that to the Soul, which the five Senses do to the Body; it's the Eye, Ear and Taster of the Soul, whereby it discerns what is good or evil to it, and accordingly the Soul doth either embrace or abhor; yea, it must discover not only good and evil, but the degree in which any thing is good or evil, before the Soul can be suitably affected therewith, which can never be done with any consideration. If this Eye be shut, set the greatest Danger before a Man and he will not fear; set the greatest Delights before him and he will not be moved to desire them. What's the reason that a wicked Man goes on in sin and will not forsake it, when you display Hell before his Eyes, but because he considers it not? It appears to him not to be so terrible, because this Eye is shut. If you run a Sword at a Man whose Eyes are shut, and sees it not, he will not endeavour to avoid the thrust; but he that hath his Eyes open, and sees what's coming towards him, will quickly start back and decline that instrument of Death. A careless Man that never considered well what a fearful thing it is to fall into the Hands of God, *Heb. 10. 31.* now how intolerable his Displeasure is when it shall break forth in good earnest, and burn like a consuming

fire, will venture on it for a little deluding pleasure. A Man that considers not the worth of his Soul will neglect it, and not think it worth so many Prayers and Tears, and such diligence as must be used to procure the Salvation thereof; for till his Heart be touched with a lively feeling and sense of these truths, he will ~~not~~ neglect them and live after the Flesh; and if he doth not weigh and consider them, his Heart will never be made to feel them. What's the reason that Men hug and embrace a little dirt and filth, and suffer their Affections to cleave so fast to their Carnal Contentments? It can be resolved into nothing better than that they do not consider what Sin and Folly they are guilty of, and what an impediment they are, being embraced to the true content and happiness of their Souls, otherwise they would not, nor could not, be so mad as
 to embrace the present World and to prefer it before the World to come. Well then, is it Consideration that must bring a Man to a worthy Remembrance of God, because it opens the Eye and affects the Heart, and puts an edge upon every Truth that doth bias and dispose the Soul to this Remembrance, that it's felt and entertained with some sincere measure of submission. The Soul is such a Subject, that cannot be wrought upon without its own consent, and that's not easily gained to any thing that's of a reforming saving tendency, unless frequent and serious Consideration make way. The Soul will never consent to any purpose, that the Flesh should be afflicted and humbled, that it's Affections and Lusts should be mortified and subdued, till
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Consideration shew the necessity thereof, and the Death that will follow, if this Death do not go before. There are some truths that are preparative to this Remembrance, which though they are easie to be known, yet they will never be drunk in or digested, till Consideration shew their excellency and plead their great necessity and importance to us, and give no rest till it hath enforced consent and resolution to obey. These Truths are of two sorts,

1. *Some are Physick and meerly purgative.*
2. *Others are Cordial, and such as are restorative and comforting.*

And although there is reluctancy enough in the distempered Soul of Man to both these, yet he nauseates these of the first rank most, and hath the greatest enmity to them. He doth not relish the second sort, but he perfectly hates the first sort; the reason is, because these Truths which I call Medicinal, work directly upon the disturbing Humour and filthy Matter, that must be evacuated and cast out, before we can find any Gust or Savour in those other Truths that are Nutritive and Cordial. What averfness is there in the corrupt Nature of Man, to admit those Truths into the Heart, that cross either, 1. The Interest, or, 2. The Inclination of the Flesh, and that strike all the Heart and Root of the Old Man; and that teach Self-denial, that is, the mortification of inward Lusts, and the contempt of all outward Objects, so far as they feed and nourish them? And will a Man ever pull out his

his right Eye, and cut off his right Hand (for his Pride and his Passion, and his Intemperance, and his Petulary and Lasciviousness, or any other Lust to which his Nature prompts him, are as dear to him as his most beloved Members) and will a Man ever digest such truths as these, or take them into any place of strength, that are such bloody enemies to his raging prevailing Lusts ; and arm and mortifie them against so dear and near a part of him ? This can never be done till Consideration make it appear, that the Man is undone for ever, and had better he had never been born, be he never so rich and honourable in the World, in whom there is any reigning Lust or Corruption ; till frequent thoughts convince him thoroughly, that he that saveth such a Life as this shall lose it, and a better. But on the other side, he that kills his Corruptions, and suffereth no sin to prevail, but mortifieth every one of these Members, that make up the Body and the Life of the Old Man ; he that loseth such a Life as this shall find it, and prove an unspeakable gainer, *Mark 8. 35.*

Let me instance more particularly in some truths, that must go before a worthy Remembrance of God, which can never get into the Heart and work to any purpose, *till they be fermented by Consideration.*

1. It's an easie Truth, and very obvious to Man's understanding, *That God is the chief Good,* and our true happiness consisteth in his Love and Goodness. This is the master Principle and Foundation of all Religion, and inspires all practical Truths, and the duty depends upon them with
Breath

Breath and Life; and were it well thought upon, it would make a mighty change and alteration in the World; you may see by what it does upon some that do consider it, what it would do upon others if they were not inconsiderate. In that proportion that Men consider this Truth and believe it, they will study to please God, and resemble him in all his *imitable Perfections*; and their Love and Hatred will imitate his: They will follow after Peace and Holiness, without which daily Consideration assures them they can never see God, *Heb. 12. 14.* And they will have no Fellowship with the unfruitful works of Darkness, because God hateth them, *Eph. 5. 11.* None in *sensu morali*, though not in *sensu physico*. Where that that falls short of a ruling mastering degree in Morality, is said not to be. And the Scripture frequently speaks after the same rate. But he that lives after the Flesh, and minds earthly things, and blesteth himself in all worldly happiness, cannot consider the fore-mentioned Truth, and therefore is guilty of this Folly because he doth not consider.

It's another weighty truth, *That we are fallen 2.*
from God and Happiness, into a state of Sin and Misery, and shall never know what true Happiness means till we return. We were made after his Likeness at the first, and whilst we kept the stamp of his Image on us, were happy in his Favour and Love; and all Creatures were ready at our beck and service; and Sorrow and Misery stood afar off and came not near us; but having now provoked God and lost his Image, we are now unspeakably miserable, and in the path-way
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to Eternal Misery. And what's the reason that there are so few that are affected at the Heart with their condition, that loath themselves, that cry out of this bondage, and would be set at liberty and restored into favour again, but because there are but few that consider it. The rest of their minds are taken up with other things, and with worldly vanities; and such disturbing thoughts as these are at the first, are not permitted to enter, which if they be not frequent and serious till the Soul hath got a full sight of the evil of Gods displeasure, and sin that hath provoked it, and the necessity and blessedness of his Favour. These Truths, though they should be taken in or assented to, they will lie crude and raw upon the Stomach, and never digest into good nourishment, and be distributed into Life and Practice. Consideration must awaken the Soul out of its Stupidity and Insensibleness, which is Natural to all, or else it will sleep into everlasting Death.

3. A third plain, but necessary and important Truth is, That we are undone for ever unless we feel our Sin and Misery so as to confess it with inward shame, and be humbled under it, into that degree of Brokenness and Contrition; that Salvation by Christ is the most welcome news that ever we heard or can hear, insomuch that we embrace him with the highest love and respect, and do heartily consent to be governed by him, till he hath subdued our Corruptions, sanctified us by his Spirit, and made us meet for love and favour of God again. But none can ever feel the worth and necessity of Christ and renewing

renewing Grace, who have not set this matter by Consideration, frequently before your Eyes. It's true of the Intellectual as well as the Corporal Eye, out of sight out of mind; what we see not by Consideration, we shall never mind nor care for. You will slight the greatest Truths, and lie still in any state in the World, though never so uneasie, rather than part with sin and come to Christ, if you do not consider that your sin will be bitterness in the end, and Christ will make amends for all that do or suffer for him. There be many other Truths in which I might instance, What's the reason that matters of such a consequence and weight, and so certain and out of doubt as Death and the Resurrection, and the Glory of Heaven, and the Torments of Hell, should work no more, and make Men solicitous about them? Why do Men die before they were aware, and in such a careless and unprepared state? Why do they run upon the vengeance of Eternal Fire, and take no care to get the Crown that fadeth not away? *1 Pet. 5. 14.* * They are inconsiderate, and will not suffer their Hearts to muse on these things. O if these things were considered to any purpose, your worldly business, which you now pretend so much against these things, would seem light and trivial, and meer Childs-play, in comparison of that work which is of Ten thousand times higher concernment. You would not on the one hand neglect the opportunities of your Souls, and of getting Grace and Peace with God, thorough our Lord Jesus Christ, and making your self for ever. If these thoughts did but dwell in your Minds,

Minds, and if Consideration did but open your Eye, and shew you the worth and excellency, the force and necessity, of these big and most concerning Truths. Neither would you on the other hand, attend the means of Grace with such sleepy, inattentive wandering Hearts. Is not that Man a sot indeed, that can sleep upon a Scaffold when he is going to Execution? Is not that Man a careless, stupid wretch indeed, that will give no attention or heed what the Judge says when he is passing Sentence either of Life or Death upon him? And yet it is the case of many a sinner, that's careless and inconsiderate, when he is dying and going into another World; and therefore he makes none, or but foolish preparation. Consideration, if it were followed, would bring home these Truths, and give them a power to pierce and become sensible, and make the Man that doth consider them to live answerably to them. Physick worketh not in the Prescription or Doctors Bill, no nor in the Apothecaries Shop, where it is prepared, till it be taken and let down into the Stomach, or some way taken into the Body; for it nourisheth not in the Dish or on the Table, no nor though it be taken into the Mouth, if it be not transmitted into the Stomach and there concocted. Neither will the greatest Truths cure the Distempers of a sinful and perverted Heart, or nourish up the Soul to any Spiritual Life and vigour in the Book; nor in the Mouth of the Teacher, nor yet if they be taken into the Brain, till Meditation bring them to the Heart, and the Soul by Consideration look frequently upon the worth
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and weight of them, and enforce Subjection and Obedience thereto. For want of this Consideration of these few, plain and important Truths it is, that Men forget God, and never attain to a due Remembrance of him; and for want of this they relapse and lose their first Love and Memory of him. And therefore Consideration is the best way to beget this Remembrance at first, and to restore it afterwards.

Secondly, Such Consideration is very sovereign and powerful, to bring a Man at first to Remember God, or to recover his Thoughts and Affections again after a decay and relapse; because in both these cases the Word of God calls to Consideration, and insists perpetually upon this Duty. When the Prophets of God are sent to call Men to their first or after Repentance, they usually deliver their Message in terms that express or imply Consideration. After the return of the Jews from the *Babylonish* Captivity, from the which the Lord had brought them by such a mighty hand, they forgot the Lord, and grew presently careless and negligent of his House and Worship; and the Prophet *Haggai* is sent, 1. To censure and reprove the sin; and 2. To prescribe the Remedy and Means to cure their sin and bring them to Repentance. Their sin is taxed pretty sharply, and is charged on them by a cutting Interrogation, *Hag. 1. 4. Is it time for you, O ye, to dwell in your cieled Houses, and Gods House lie waste?* and consequently his Service neglected, which was then so much confined to the Temple. In the next verse he proposeth the Remedy,

ver. 5. Now therefore, thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways. Nay to shew the vertue and necessity of it, he urgeth it the second time *ver. 7. Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, consider your ways.* And the Prophet *Isaiah* implieth the excellency of this Remedy, in that he doth lay the blame of *Israels* Rebellion and Ingratitude upon the want of this. They were grown to a strange pass of monstrous Wickedness and Ingratitude, which the Prophet knew not how to express, and therefore calls upon Heaven and Earth to take notice, that God had nourished and brought up Children, and yet they rebelled against him, *Esa. 1. 2.* and fetcheth his proof from the Brutes and irrational Creatures, to convince them of their sin. The Oxe knoweth his Owner, and the Ass his Masters Crib, (1.) saith *Vatublus* the Master of his Crib. But *Israel* doth not know; and what's the reason of such shameful miscarriage? *My People doth not consider.* And *Moses* intimateth, that Death and Judgment, which are the most powerful means to awaken Men to Repentance; and the Remembrance of God will do no good without Consideration; but if he could bring them to this Duty, to consider of these things, he did not doubt their Welfare and Happiness, *Deut. 32. 29. O that my People were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end.* This act of Consideration applied to this Object, is a most excellent means to bring Men to Wisdom and Understanding, which are insolent with an Impenitency and Forgetfulness of God. And without this leading act of the Soul, there can be

be no beſeeming Apprehenſions of him, nor Service rightly performed to him. And where there is leaſt of this, there is moſt of Formality and ſlightneſs in his Worſhip, and moſt of Irreligion and Athieſm in the Life. And therefore *Moses* when he is Exhorting the Children of *Israel* to a due Remembrance of God and Veneration of him, he gives them this Advice, *Know therefore this day, and conſider it in thine Heart, that the Lord he is God, in Heaven above, and upon the Earth beneath; and there is none elſe*, Deut. 4. 39. When Men flee off from this, and will not ſet themſelves to conſider and underſtand, neither *Correction* nor *Inſtruction*, nor *Mercies* will ſucceed; but all will loſe their deſigned end, and leave a Man under Impenitency and Forgetfulneſs. And therefore *Moses* adviſeth *Israel* thus to conſider, *Dent. 8. 5. Thou ſhalt not conſider it in thine Heart, that as a Man chaſteth his Son, ſo the Lord thy God chaſteth thee.* The ſame word in the *Hebrew* ſignifieth to *Conſider and Underſtand*, becauſe the one ſo much dependeth upon the other.

And as, 1. *Correction* will not proſper without it, ſo neither will,

2. *Inſtruction*, which is another means to produce this worthy Remembrance of God. Hence it is that the Apoſtle urgeth to conſider what he had taught them, or elſe the

L. Inſtructions

Instructions he had given them were like to be as Water spilt upon the ground, *Ney zhiyo. Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding in all things, 2 Tim. 2. 7.* It's the Lord that giveth understanding, but it is to such as consider, and no other. And as neither of the former will speed without the frequent repeated act of Consideration; not Correction, not Instruction, so neither,

3. Will his Favour and Mercies, properly so called (for I know both the former may be called Mercies and Favours in a larger sense) These, I say, that are Mercies to present sense and feeling, will do no good, or else a great deal of hurt without Consideration; God will lose our acknowledgment of them, and we the blessed comfortable fruits of them. What the Prophet saith of a wicked Man, I may well say of an Inconsiderate Man, *Esay 26. 10. Let Favour be shewed to such a one, yet will he not remember whence it is, nor learn Righteousness.* And therefore Samuel presseth this Duty as the fittest to bring the stupid Israelites to the Remembrance of God, implied in the terms, Fear and Service; *Only fear the Lord and serve him in truth, for consider how great things he hath done for you, 1 Sam. 12. 24.* And as Consideration is the likeliest means to bring a Man home to the Remembrance of God in Christ at first, and to improve Correction, Instruction and Mercy to the end; so it is as successful to recover a Man after a Relapse

Relapse into Forgetfulness. To this Remedy *David* was beholding (though never a whit the less to God, who put him upon the use of it) *I thought on my ways*, saith he, *and turned my Feet unto thy Testimonies*, Psal. 119. 59. And *Peter* was thus recovered after his shameful Forgetting of Christ and Denial of him; and *Peter* remembred, (1.) Thought upon and considered the words which *Jesus* said unto him, *Before the Cock crow thou shalt deny me thrice; and he went out and wept bitterly*, Mat. 26. 75. And *Elihu* proposeth this to *Job* as a proper Remedy to abase and humble him that so much insisted upon his own vindication, and remembred not his infinite distance from God, as he should have done, and therefore brought him to the Bar of his own perverted Judgment. *Hearken unto this, O Job, stand still and consider the wondrous works of God*, Job 37. 14. And this course cured him. *I have heard of thee*, saith he, *with the hearing of the Ear, but now mine Eyes seeth thee. Wherefore I abhor my self, and repent in Dust and Ashes*, Job 42. 5, 6. He did before stretch his own Righteousness so far, and confine the Sovereignty of God, as if he had done unjustly or cruelly in afflicting one so innocent as he was: But when he had more attentively considered the Majesty and Glory of God, and his wonderful Power, according to the scheme and draught that *Elihu* had set before him. Then the Bladder was prick'd, and he was humbled in his own thoughts, and

saw that for his very Integrity, which he held so fast and justified so much, he was beholding to God for. :

And as Consideration is a means to bring the Heart to God at first, and to recover the Heart to him, when it begins to depart by unbelief, so it is an excellent help to increase and strengthen this Remembrance, to strain it to a higher peg, and make it more intense and vigorous. *My Heart was hot within me, while I was musing the Fire burned, then spake I with my Tongue, Psal. 39. 3.* The Consideration of Gods immutable Goodness and everlasting Favour, and the brevity and vanity of all other things, stir'd the Fire and awakened his Heart to a more savoury Remembrance of God; when he had considered how many disgraces Riches did lie open to, and what a blast Mans Life is, he subjoyns: *And now, O Lord, what wait I for, my hope is even in thee, Psal. 39. 7.* And while the thoughts of Believers are inditing good matters, their Tongue is as the Pen of a ready Writer; quick to express the praises of God, *Psal. 45. 1.* And Davids desires after God grew more strong and impetuous, when he thinks on the Pleasure and Priviledge of Communion with God, from which he was banished in the Wilderness. *When I think on or remember these things, I pour out my Soul in me, for I had gone with the multitude, with the voice of Joy and Praise.* He means to the publick and solemn Worship of God.

God. And now the Consideration of his want of these Priviledges- cut this gash in his Heart, and made this gaping of his desires after God.

Caution.

I know there are other means to be used besides Consideration; but this is, 1. The leading act to bring on all the other that have any subserviency to this Remembrance of God. And, 2. The act that inspires Life and Soul into all other means, whither they be such as *are near to the end* (such as are near Repentance, Mortification, Faith, and all internal Grace, Holiness) or *such as are more remote from the end*; As Reading, Hearing, Prayer, Holy Conference, whose success doth usually depend upon Consideration; and as it is the leading act. 3. So it is the act in which most are defective, and for want of which so many do miscarry and lose themselves for ever, and therefore I call it a principle means to beget and cherish the Remembrance of God, as I have proved.

And so much for the Reasons.

I come now to the Application.

1. *Reproof.*

1. *Reproof.*

F*irst*, If Consideration be a means so necessary to the Remembrance of God, then here's sad tidings to the *Inconsiderate*. Such Men must needs Forget God, unless he were to be seen with Corporal Eyes, and his glorious Perfections did lie open unto sense. But alas! what a poor superficial Beauty can that discover; it can pierce no farther than the surface of a bodily Object, and the external Accidents; it's a meer stranger to the inward make and composition of such gross beings as these are, and discerns not that which is most essential to them. Much lets can sense discern the Nature of Spirits, and find out the infinite depths of the Divine Nature, and search out the Dimensions of his Glory. It's usually such persons as these that make use of no other tool than sense to build themselves up in knowledge, that have so much Atheism in their thoughts. But it's another Eye that must inform us of the Being and Perfections of God, and make known to us both his Immensity and Eternity, whereby all his other Attributes and Perfections become bottomless and unsearchable.

This Eye is two fold, according to the double light that is afforded to us for discovery. The Eye of, 1. *Reason*. 2. *Faith*. According to the double light of, 1. *Nature*, 2. *Scripture*, which doth discover the Object to these two Eyes.

There are but three ways by which we can come to gain any knowledge of God, or any other thing, either,

1. By sense; so we come to know that the Snow is white, or that Grass is green. Or,

2. By way of Deduction or Inference, or Ratiocination; so we come to know the Sun is up, though we see it not, because we see it is day. Our quick understanding doth fetch and conclude the one from the other, because the Sun and the Day are necessarily connected together.

3. We come to the knowledge of some things upon the meer credit and report of others. Thus we come to know that there is such a City as *Constantinople* or *Paris*, though we never saw them, or any matters that are related to us; and we have no other knowledge of these than what is grounded upon the testimony of others. The first Knowledge we call Sense, the second Reason, the third Faith.

Now Faith is two-fold, for either it is grounded upon the credit of Man or God. The first is fallible, because there is no Man but may deceive or be deceived, and is defective both in Knowledge and Goodness. The one makes it possible for him to deceive, the other to be deceived. And from hence it is that his Credit is crack'd, and his Testimony, where it is not accompanied with some other evidence insufficient. But a Divine Testimony (where we are sure of it) is infallible; for it's Blasphemy to imagine that God is so weak as to be deceived, or so bad as to deceive. Hence it is that whatsoever we have such a Testimony for, we may be as certain of, as if we saw it with our Eyes, or had the greatest evidence of Reason for it. Such a Faith as this and Reason, are the two Eyes by which we do discover what it is to be known of God in his Word and Works.

But Consideration is that which fixeth both these Eyes, and helps them to understand more distinctly, and be affected with the glorious Perfections of God, as they are discovered in the Scripture, or may be gathered from the works of Creation and Providence. A cast of either of these Eyes, of Faith or Reason, but especially the first, may discover God to the Soul in some degree, enough to leave it without excuse, if it seek no further; but it's Consideration only that can give us such a sight of the Object, as shall command the highest esteem

esteem and love of him, which must go before and make way for a worthy Remembrance of him. Though we should suppose a Person (that's guilty of Inconsideration, and doth not meditate on God, his Word and Works, in any degree suited to the Object) to have so much Faith and Reason as to profess Godliness, and to become a formal Christian, yet he will never be a Saint and Christian at the Heart and Root, till his Reason and Faith be radicated and confirmed by Consideration. Neither is it any Consideration, the want whereof doth make a Man so miserable. Wicked Men spend thoughts enough upon their Corn and Wine, and Oyl, upon their Profits and Pleasures, and tickle themselves with such Meditations, and fix their Eye too much upon worldly Glory, and pre-injoy their happiness before it comes, and comfort themselves by an after Remembrance of it. I would they were in these things more inconsiderate, or at least consider them after another manner, what reference they have to the Life to come, to the pleasing of God and saving of their Souls, or consider in what a bitterness their sweetest pleasures will conclude, or think on them according to the description that God hath given of them in his Word. I know Consideration, if it be rational, serious and impartial, will digrace and shame the best of their sensual, brutish Pleasures; and the most sober Comforts here on Earth, that are joyned with the neglect of God and Mens Souls.

And

And therefore such Thoughts as tie Mens Affections faster to these things, are not worthy the name of Consideration; besides, such thoughts as these stand in the greatest enmity to that Consideration, which the Text calls to, and the neglect whereof is so pernicious and destructive. It's impossible for those that employ their thoughts with eagerness and delight upon earthly things, to command them to any exercise that deserves to be called Consideration. And if they be forced at any time to think on these matters that are out of sight, and to meditate on God and the Life to come, and the slipperiness of present things, it will be with so much weariness, confusion and partiality, that will quite intercept the fruit and comfort thereof. I know the thoughts of the best move heavily and disorderly to this work, partly thorough want of matter and skill to use it to their further edification; and partly thorough want of use and more frequent exercise in this kind, as also because they are still earthly in part, as well as others, but yet they do frequently consider these things, and are affected with them, and provoked hereby to labour after them, more than any thing that the World can propose; but woe be to those that consider not these things till they are thus affected and resolved. 'Tis not some cursory thoughts that will affect a Man with the excellency of God and his Ways, and the love of Christ, so as to turn the course and bent of his Life towards them, and to fix his Resolution

tion to cleave fast to them, whatsoever difficulty or discouragement he meet with ; and yet if this be not done , profess what thou wilt , thou art not a true Christian ; yea , if thou art inconsiderate in any notorious degree , thou art undoubtedly a perfect enemy to the Cross of Christ , and a persecutor of his Servants ; *David* gives no better description of such Men , *Psal.* 10. 4. *The wicked through the Pride of his Countenance will not seek after God , God is not in all his thoughts.* And then mark what followeth , 1. He is an enemy to the Cross of Christ , *His ways are always grievous , thy Judgments are far above out of his sight. His Mouth is full of cursing and deceit , and fraud ; under his tongue is mischief and vanity.* And , 2. He is also a Persecutor of his Servants. *He sitteth in the lurking places of the Villages , in the secret places doth he murder the innocent , ver. 8.* I dare confidently say , that an Inconsiderate Man cannot remember God ; nor believe in Christ , to say the best that can be said of him. But he may do worse than be a base unbeliever , and run into all Excess , Riot and Ungodliness , when a fair opportunity is offered , if Consideration do not hold the Bridle and keep him in.

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There are these two or three comprehensive Mischiefs, that do always follow upon the neglect of this duty.

First, Inconsideracy leads Men to Hypocrisie and meer Formality in the service of God. There's none so over slight and superficial in the Service of God, as those that considers not with whom they have to do. Custom and Education, and the common Example of others, with whom we live; and the Reputation that Christianity hath got among us, may draw us to the external Worship of God; and compose the Body to do some seeming homage to our Redeemer, both in Publick and Private; but it's the Consideration, of the Excellency of that God whom we serve, and his Service, that can make the Heart to draw near and busily attend, with Affections answerable to the Service it's employed in. And what acceptance such inconsiderate Service is like to find by him, that will consider and weigh all our Services, and judge Righteously, you may see, *Esay 29. 13.* *For as much as this People, he means the Jewish Hypocrites, draw near me with their Mouth, and with their Lips do honour me, but have removed their Heart far from me.* Therefore he threatens to bring heavy Judgments on them. Their Hearts must needs be far from God that considers it not, for that's the first and leading Act of the Soul that brings it on, and makes way for the following

following Acts of Judgment. Complacency and Affection, without which there can be no reasonable Service; and how well God will receive any other Service from a reasonable Creature, it's a thing of easie understanding. What an high presumption and affront is it to stand before God with the face and confidence of his People, and to bow our selves with an external Reverence before him, when the Soul is idle, or otherwise employed; and there's nothing of Reverence or Worship in the Heart! What a provocation, to deal with God as your Cheats and Impostors deal with us, that make a shew to our Eye of things that are nothing so, and have no reality, but cheat and delude our Sense! To use Legerdemain and slight in the Service of God; and to convey a Prayer in the presence of God, as if it came warm from the Heart, when it was never born any deeper than the Mouth. Be not deceived, God will not be mocked, *Gal. 6. 7.* Think not to serve the All-seeing God as the *Gibeonites* served *Israel*; nor to come and make a Covenant with God by Prayer, as if your Services came from a far Countrey, even from the depths and bottom of your Hearts, when they come no farther than the Throat, and are a mess of meer wind and words; and these words are also nigh thee, even at thy Mouth; as the Apostle in another case, *Rom. 10. 8.* You may laugh at an Ape when he bows to you and kisseth his hand, as if he meant you some high respect,
but

but you will not take your self to be honoured thereby, much less will God take the gestures of your Body and your outward Presence, and the sound of your Lips, and such ridiculous Actions, for a substantial and rational Service; that Heart is dangerously mistaken that thinks so. There's no Harmony in Gods Ear, unless Understanding, Judgment and Affections, together with the outward Worship and reverend Deportment of the Body; all come together to make up the Quire; otherwise 'twill be the Sacrifice of a Fool; and such as are foolish cannot stand in his sight, *Psal. 5. 5.* (1.) Either with approbation or without shame, and where there is no Consideration nor inward Intention of Mind and Heart, there can be no other Sacrifice than this, nothing but meer cheating Formalities. *Keep thy Foot therefore,* saith *Solomon,* (that is) *thy Heart*) *when thou entrest upon the Service of God, and be more ready to hear than to give the Sacrifice of Fools;* and why is it the Sacrifice of Fools? mark, the reason follows, *For they consider not that they do evil,* *Eccl. 5. 1.* This it is that betrays them and marrs all. If Consideration stay at home, better thou hadst never gone to Church, for God will be sure to miss that and hate such Worship, where the most essential, vital part is wanting, and count thee a greater sinner in some respect, than if thou hadst kept away the Carcass also, since the Soul was wanting. *Who is blind but my Servant, or deaf as my Messenger?* Who is blind as he that is perfect, and blind as the

the Lords Servant, *Eſay* 42. 19. Here God accuſeth his Servants of a greater ignorance and deafneſs than other Men, that worſhip him not at all. What's the reaſon? The next verſe will tell you, *ver.* 20. *Seeing many things but thou obſerveſt or conſidereſt not.* Seneca jears the *Jews* for caſting a ſeventh part of their time upon a Weekly Sabbath; and jear he might well enough, if this poor ſhadow of meer outward Worſhip were all that that People could ſpare him. Though I do not excuſe the Blaſphemy of that Heathen Moralift; Mr. *Weemes* in his *Chriſtian Synagogue*, tells us of a *Jewiſh* diſtinction. They it ſeems diſtinguiſh'd between the Internal and External Reſt of the Sabbath. The Internal Reſt they ſtil'd שבתהסוד (1.) The Secret Sabbath; the External Reſt is when Men reſt from bodily Labour, but give not themſelves to the Worſhip of God in the Spirit. This they call'd the Sabbath of the Ox and the Aſs. If thine External Preſence & bodily Worſhip, be all that thou canſt offer up to God; the Dog that follows thee to Church, or thy Beaſt, might be taught to ſerve God as well as thou. O what contemptible and undervaluing thoughts have ſuch Men of their Maker, and the Object of their Worſhip, or rather none at all. Who can ſit or kneel before God with an irreverend or roving Heart, and quietly ſuffer this intolerable diſhonour to be done to him, that care not for the manner how 'tis performed, ſo they be but locally preſent, and makes the common frailty too much

much their refuge, because it is the common Complaint of the best, that their Hearts are quickly lost in Gods Service, therefore they are well enough, though they take no effectual course to heal it. Well, it's want of Consideration, not only in the time of Service, but at other times, that puts them upon this absurdity in their approaches to God; to give him the Eye and Mouth, and any thing but the Heart. The very Heathens themselves, had more judicious manly thoughts of God than such Christians have. Their Books are stuff'd with such sayings, as imply inward Love and Reverence, to be more acceptable than the fatest Sacrifice. I could multiply Sentences enough to such a purpose, if I thought it were worth the while. Thus you see one sad effect of Inconsideration.

Secondly, As the want of Consideration doth mutilate the Service of God, and cut out the very heart of it, so it makes it altogether tasteless and insipid. It's impossible that God should be served in a due manner, and his Servants not feel the difference between his and all other Service, *Mic. 2. 7.* *Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? Who can say he hath cleansed his Heart in vain? Psal. 73. 13.* And that there is no profit in the sincere Worship of God; and that in keeping his Commandments there is no reward? *Psal. 19. 11.* Who can say there is no sweetness in the Hearts approaching to God? That it is a dry and empty Employment, though performed

formed with the greatest solemnity and sincerity. Where is the Man that can step forth and say, that it's labour and loss, and is not accompanied with the greatest Honour, Pleasure, Profit, unless it be the Hypocrites and formal Professors, that slight it over; and whose Hearts are not engaged in the Work?

Mic. 2. 7. Do not my words do good to him that walketh uprightly? Verily there is a reward for the Righteous, *Psal. 58. 11.* I mean such a one that comes not behind his Duty, but keeps company with it. You may safely and confidently aver, to him that soweth Righteousness there is a sure reward, as well as shall be, *Prov. 11. 28.* Many a refreshing, joyful Song he hath whilst he is scattering this Seed; what then will the joy of the Harvest be, if Plowing and Sowing be such a pleasing Work? I confess in all other Service that doth not refer to this, the question may be truly put, What doth it profit? Where is any pleasure that my Heart and Soul can taste and find? I have many a time come home by Weeping Cross, when I have travelled hardest in the affairs and matters of this Life. But he that saith his Heart hath found no sweetness nor reward in his approximation unto God, and in the exercise of his Worship, if he understands himself, he doth but proclaim his Hypocrisie, and tell the World that his Heart is defective in the Work: That he doth not Worship his Maker and Redeemer in Spirit and in Truth, *Job. 4. 24.*

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That he doth not consider to whom he doth repair, nor what he may expect; nor who is ready to intercede for him, if he doth but lock to him with a believing Heart; otherwise, if these things come under any due Consideration, he could not find no taste nor sweetness in such a Service, nor return with such a dry and empty Heart, from the Fountain of infinite Joy and Fulness. Could a Man come to the Sun and not be enlightened, and stand under it's warm refreshing Beams and not be revived? Could a Man touch the Hem and Border of Christs Garment, and feel no Virtue come forth for his Refreshment? much less can a Man stand in the presence of his Glory, and have no reflections of Light and Comfort from him? You may as well say that a Man may feed upon the most nourishing Sustenance, and concoct what he eats, and yet not thrive at all. As that a Man may thoroughly and seriously consider the great sanctifying Truths, and live under the power of such Thoughts, and find nothing of Gust and Relish in them. Peace and Comfort in some Degree, are as inseparable from Grace, if Consideration bring it into Exercise, as Light is from the Sun. And as Consideration doth gather strength, and is more lively and vigorous, so will the Exercise of Grace be more fervent; and when Grace is upon the Wing, and in a hasty flight Heavenwards, the Virgins that are her Companions, Peace and Joy, and Comfort, I mean, will not

not be dead and unactive, but will, like the shadow, keep company and resemblance with the Body to which they do belong. And they that are most frequent and strong in the Exercise of their Grace, Faith, Love and Hope, will have the stronger and more frequent Consolations and Refreshments. And therefore *David*, whose Faith and Love, and Thankfulness to God, were continually working, had the greater sense and experience of this inward Joy and Comfort. And such was the degree thereof oftentimes, that he could not contain himself, but he must needs break forth into Songs and Triumph. *How sweet are thy words unto my taste, yea, sweeter than Honey to my Mouth, Psal. 119. 103. O how I love thy Law, it is my Meditation all the day, ver. 97. Thy Statutes have been my Songs in the House of my Pilgrimage, ver. 54.* The service of God must needs be tedious and irksome to them that have their minds on something else, and think not what a courtesie they do themselves whilst they draw near to God with the Heart. What a favour it is to approach such a presence? What an Honour it reflects upon them? and what advantage there comes in every way to him, that offers a Sacrifice fit for God to accept.

2. *Exhortation..*

S*ecndly*, Having shewed you what an Obstruction Inconsideracy is to the Remembrance of God, and instanced in two woful inconveniences, that necessarily flow from an incogitant heedless Service of God. By this time I hope our Eyes may be a little opened to see what a sin it's to be defective in so great a Duty as Consideration is; and therefore it's the more seasonable to warn and beseech you that you would not at one dash blot out all true Worship of God, and solid Peace and Comfort out of your own Hearts, by a sin so inconsistent with the Rational Spiritual Nature that God hath bestowed upon Man. Must not he that hath made both Soul and Body, be worshiped with both, and served with their united strength? As the Eye guides the Body, so doth Consideration first stir up, and then steer and govern the Soul in all its operations; and therefore if you leave out that, the Soul cannot stir or move suitably to its Nature. If then Forgetfulness of God be a sin, that you would not for all the World be found guilty of, at the great trying day, then be sure not lay the Foundation of such a guilt by the neglect of Consideration. Use that Faculty in all things, if you would they should be wisely done,

pone, but fail not to use it in the service of God, and in the matters of highest importance. And as you have to do with God in all things, either mediately or immediately, in a nearer or remoter manner; so it behoves you to consider, if you will discharge the Duty and rightly perform your Work.

There are but two sorts of Actions that a Man hath a capacity to produce, and in both we have to do with God.

1. There are some Actions that have God for their Object (or something immediately subservient to him) and their end also. Such are all Actions of Religious Worship, whether *External*, as Prayer, Praises, solemn Invocation of his Name, in an assertory or promissory Oath; hearing of the Word, participation of the Sacraments; or *Internal*, as Faith, Love, Reverence, Dependence, Trust, Submission.

2. There are other Actions that have not God, but something else for their Object, yet they should have God for their *Principal and Ultimate End*. Such are all the Actions where we have to do with Creatures, whether

They be Acts of { Labour:
Refreshment.

In Study, the Object about which our Action is conversant, is that which our thoughts are exercised about, whither it be Names or Things. In Traffique the Object of our Action is that with or for which we Traffique. In Eating and Drinking the Object is our Meat and Drink. But the end in all these should be the pleasing of God and the promoting his Glory, which is done when we ask Counsel of him, and humbly beg his Direction in all these, and heartily devote the Knowledge, the Strength, the Gain; which comes in by these Actions to the befriending of his Interest. Now in both these sorts of Action (as I have already hinted) we have chiefly to do with God, who is principally concerned; and therefore both of them must be guided by the Law of God, for the matters and manner of them, that they may attain their end; but do this, if you can, without Consideration. *The Heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked; who can know it? Jer. 17. 9.* It will make you believe that your intentions are upright, and that God's Honour is aimed at, when there is nothing else. If therefore you would not be deceived, believe not your own Hearts, much less the Tongues of others, that would flatter you into a good opinion of your selves. Judge not according to an outward sudden appearance of things, but judge Righteous Judgments. But this you can never do, if you *Consider* not. There are depths in the Heart of Man, depths in all his Actions, depths in the Word of God, which is the
rule

rule of them. The Devil hath a deep reach in his Temptations, whereby he sets upon us, and manageth his Work with the greatest Art and Cunning. The baits that he useth are not easily discerned. Vice and Wickedness is specious oftentimes; Truth and Honesty appears in a disguise, and seem on a sudden like him that was the perfection of Beauty, to have no Form nor Comeliness in them, *Esay 53. 2.* Without Consideration you can never search these Mysteries, nor wade thorough these Depths. The careless and inconsiderate Man will be taken and insnared; he will catch at a shew instead of a Substance. He will embrace an Appearance instead of Death, and the way will seem right in his Eyes; the end whereof is the way of Truth. It's a fearful charge which the Prophet *Esay* fastens upon the careless Jews, *Esay 55. 8.* *There is no Judgment in their goings, they discern not where is safety nor where is danger.* Such Persons he knew could not escape Destruction. If you Consider not there can be no judgment in your goings; you will be in danger every step you tread; you will never find out your duty, nor be able to perform it; neither Faith nor Reason will bear any sway in the course of your Life (for Consideration puts these into power and authority) but Sense will rule you, and you will live after the Flesh, and so must take what follows. The Apostle tells you what that is, *Rom. 8. 13.* *If you live after the Flesh ye shall die;* and *Gal. 6. 8.* *He that soweth to*

his Flesh, Ball of the Flesh reap Corruption.
 (1.) Perdition. If then you would not bring
 such a shameful reproach upon *Humane Na-*
ture, and live like a Brute in the shape of a Man,
 nor like an Infidel under the disguise of a Chri-
 stian, nor reap the fruit of a Sensual Fleahy
 Life, use *Consideration*; I say again, live under
 the power of *Consideration*.

The *Consideration* which I commend to thee
 is two-fold, *viz.*

Of the { End.
 Means.

It is the work and business of every Man
 both good and bad, 1. To design an End;
 and, 2. To pursue that End, and compass his
 designed intent, by the surest means he can
 possible. The End of a worldling is to thrive
 and grow rich, and therefore it is his daily
 Study and Practice to compass his End; his
 Thoughts, Affections and Actions, are all
 busied in contriving and endeavouring to grow
 rich.

The End of a Christian is to grow rich also,
 but not in worldly Riches, but in the Grace
 of God; not to add House to House, and
 Field to Field, *Esa. 5. 8.* But to add to Faith
 Vertue, to Vertue Knowledge, 2 *Pet. 1. 5.*
 And

And to grow up to the full assurance of Understanding, *Col. 2. 2.* What makes the one so Wise, Provident and Judicious, and the other so Weak and Shallow, and so defective in his very *Reason* and *Choice*? It's this only that makes the difference; the one hath weighed and considered these things, and set the one against the other, and tried them in an even ballance; the other takes that comes first, and prefers a present Pleasure, that he tastes and feels, though it be for a short and uncertain time, before an everlasting Felicity, that he hath no sight of, but he must take upon the meer credit of God's Word. Doth that Man that looks no higher than how to fare deliciously every day, and to get a little better Wooll upon his Back than others, and to rustle in Silk and gaudy Attire, and to domineer over others, and to have his Commands fulfilled, though they be never so absurd and unreasonable. Indeed, Consider that his Life will not always last, that his Dream will quickly end. Doth he that is got into the Saddle, and makes a greater bustle and stir than his poorer Brethren, and tramples under his Feet that doth oppose him, and that will not bow down that he may go over them, or make a stirrup of them, to climbe up into a higher degree of Pride and Ambition; Doth such a one consider that he must come down at last? If he had considered this he would never have made such a foolish Choice as this, and neglected God and his Soul, for such a
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flying Sensual Happiness as this is. Doth that Man that wanders after the World, and lets out his Heart to any present Enjoyments, and seeds upon Air, and the Breath of a few lying deceived Men, whilst he seeks not the Approbation of God, by an Humble, Holy and Heavenly Life, know and consider what Dung and Dross he hath preferred before an Eternal Crown of Glory? Let the event prove who was the wisest and most considering Man, he that hath chosen Heaven, or he that hath chosen Earth; he that hath renounced God, or he that hath renounced the World; and who is the most weak and crack'd Brain'd Person, he that studies to please God, or he that studies to humour the Flesh, and to satisfy the Lusts thereof. I do not intend by what hath been spoken, to disparage any of these lower Comforts, that are used with Consideration, Thankfulness and Sobriety, and that do not lift up Mens Hearts with Pride and Insolency, and make them the more Impious, Oppressive and Intollerable, the more they have of them; nor negligent in their study to please God, and care to promote that which is right in his sight. But my design is to shew the Vertue of *Consideration*, that makes such a vast difference between Man and Man; and makes the one to dig so deep and lay his Foundation so sure, that his Happiness shall last for ever; and the other to chuse the Happiness that shall last but two or three score years at longest; it may be not the tenth part so long.

long. And as *Consideration* makes so vast a difference in the Ends, that Men design and intend, and makes one chuse Heaven, and an Eternal Life with God, for his Portion and Treasure; and to set his Heart upon it, and to make it his ultimate End. And another for want of it, to set his Heart on a little fading Beauty, Lying Honour, Perishing Riches, or unsatisfying Pleasure, or Carnal Wisdom, to be guilty of the greatest Folly, that he may swagger a little while. So it makes as wide difference in the Means, and prevails with some to humble them, that God may in his due time exalt them, to employ their thoughts how to mortifie their Affections to the World, how to strengthen the Love of God, to root their Faith more deeply, by a more frequent Exercise of it, and how to get their Hearts more affected with the wonderful love of Christ. This makes them so frequent in Prayer, so attentive upon the Word, so intent upon all Christs appointed Means, that they may increase in Spiritual Understanding and Love; when the *Inconsiderate* can dispence with these for a little worldly Gain or Ease, and prefer Earthly Toyl and Labour, before a little pains to get the true Wisdom, and to save theirsouls.

In the Name of God therefore, I beseech you, to *consider*, if you would not be guilty of the greatest dotage, and miscarry in the choice of your End; and consequently of all the means. If you would not take a Dream
for

for Happiness, and spend your Strength for nought, and be forced to confess your Folly when you come to die. Force your selves to *Consider*, especially when you have the best advantages to promote *Consideration*; when you have Time, Leisure, Health, seasonable Instruction from the Word and Providence of God; and you feel more sensible Conviction of the worth of God's Favour, and the vanity of all things; then consider and set it home, and drive on to a Resolution to forget God no longer. *Consideration* will help you to do this if you will follow it, and encourage your selves to it, and not check your Minds when they are thus employed. Plead not your Ignorance and Unskillfulness, do it as well as you can, and use will make you more expert; much less plead your Impotency, and pretend that you are utterly unable.

If a little Worldly Trouble come upon you, you can consider how to get out or shake off the Trouble. If you are under a Reproach, and a little Contempt of Men, you can Consult and Consider how you may wipe it off, and vindicate your Name and Credit. But oh what thoughts of Heart, and wise and deep *Consideration* to secure Life it self, and the Comforts that are nearest and dearest to it? These are Signs that we have the Faculty, and can *Consider* about those things that we value, or have any love to. That Men are therefore so *Inconsiderate*
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in the Concernments of their Souls; and about the matters of another Life. It's an evident Sign they value them not, they care not for them; to awaken such therefore, and put them upon this great and necessary Work, I shall suggest these following Proposals:

Incentives to Consideration.

F*irst*, You have matters of the greatest importance and necessity to *Consider*. If it were only to live happily here, and to escape the miseries of this Life, it's worth *Consideration* to bring this about; but it is an Everlasting Life and Happiness that we are to provide for, which if we do not compass, it's not the loss of this that will be our only Misery, though it be an unspeakable, unvaluable Loss. But you must bear also the Wrath of God, that will kindle on you like a devouring Fire, and the Fury of a guilty awakened Conscience, that will fall upon you like a Tempest, and fright your Soul into Everlasting Dread and Horror. And doth it not mightily concern us to *Consider* how to escape all this? If thou hast any love to thy own Soul, when the Question is whether thou shalt live or die for ever, thou wilt *Consider* and thoroughly resolve thy self.

If thou hadst lost a dear and powerful Friend, on whose Favour all thy Worldly Hopes did depend, thou wouldst not refuse to let thy Thoughts run upon such a Subject as this is, neither would it be tedious to thee to Consider how thou mightest obtain thy Pardon and regain his Favour. The case is Ten thousand times worse, incomparably more sad. You have lost the Favour of God, and are fallen under his Displeasure, and you are like to perish for ever, unless *Consideration* bring you to bewail your loss, and sin, which is the cause of it, and bring you to Repentance, and so prepare you to believe in Christ. If you had some great business to dispatch, intricate and doubtful, you would endanger your Estate or Life, if it were either neglected or imprudently managed; who would not summon up all the Reason that he hath, and consider well how he may dispatch it as successfully as he can? And do you not perceive how absurd it is to be careless, how your present Life is ordered, that must decide the Case and **Detriment** how you shall live for ever; and not to *Consider*, and that to purpose, how you may get Christ for your Friend to procure your Acceptance with God; how to get the Holy Spirit of Promise to dwell in you, to turn the stream of your Affections from Earth, to Heaven, and to subdue your Corruptions, and to fortify and encourage you against Temptations,

to

to put you upon your Duty, and to enable you to a right Performance? You will lay by such works as this, or do it in a mad and careless fashion; if you do not Consider why and how it must be done. It's *Consideration* that must shew you the truth and certainty of the Life to come, the Glory of Heaven, and what an intollerable loss it is to fall short of it: It's that must shew you what a Debter you are to God and to your Redeemer, and the worth and excellency of your Soul, and the necessity of a renewed Holy Nature, and of an Humble and Self denial Life. *Consideration*, I say, must needs shew these things and affect your Heart with them, and make you sensible how much they do import, and how nearly they do concern you, or you will never do them; you'll rather take the brutish Enjoyments that Inconsideracy will make you relish, and chuse the Pleasures of Delirancy and Madness, rather than pay so dear for true Wisdom as you must, if you are a stranger to the fore-mentioned *Consideration*, I say (pay dear) in respect of the Flesh and it's sinful Contentments, which must lose their Lives in the Service of God and your own Souls, though it will be unspeakably cheap, when you have paid the most in this kind. O how doth it import us to know God as our *Maker, Lord and Governour*, in such a manner as doth affect and captivate our Hearts to a voluntary and wilful subjection to him, as our only Felicity? How much doth it concern

us to get such a clear sight of his amiable, lovely Nature, and most transcendent Perfections, as may possess our Souls with the highest Reverence of him, and kindle the strongest love to him! that the Remembrance of him may be our sweetest daily Exercise and Employment. But without *Consideration* you cannot approach him, nor get any transforming reviving sight of him. His Ways are in the Seas, and his Paths are in the deep Waters, and Foot-steps cannot be known, nor track'd without frequent Exercise of your Considering Faculty, *Psal. 77. 19.*

Secondly, As we have the matters of greatest importance and necessity to *Consider*, so we have many special advantages to excite and awaken *Consideration*. One would think the worth and weightiness of the Object, should be spur enough to quicken us to this Work, and command our thoughts, if there were no other motive to prick us forward; but we have many current helps, many a loud call from the Word of God, set on by his appointed Servants, that are sent forth on purpose upon this Errand. Many providential help, both sweet and terrible, and something besides the common course, strange and unusual, and therefore more fit to set the Mind a thinking, from what cause they come, and what they drive at. The veryest Atheist is sometime blank'd, at some strange and unheard of events, and knows not what interpretation to make of them, nor whether to refer them; for having
denied

denied the true Author of them *Εμαυτῶν* *ὡς*
ἐν τοῖς διαλογισμοῖς. They become vain in their ima-
nations, *καὶ ἐσκοτίσθη ἡ αἴσίνη αὐτῶν καὶ ἡ καρδία*.
And their foolish Heart is darkned, *Rom. 1. 21.*
Yea, that arch Opposer of Providence, *Epicurus*
himself, had not made such a progress in Forget-
fulness of God, and the denial of a Deity, govern-
ing and over-ruling the Affairs of the Earth,
but that he was so startled by some effects that
he observed, that he could not utterly wipe
the notion of a Providence out of his
Mind. When a Blasphemer is struck dead
in the very Act of his Blasphemy, and Ven-
geance lights upon another, with a fearful
imprecation in his Mouth; and some effects are
so *anomalous*, and besides the course of Nature,
that it is no thanks to the most Atheistical to
bring in their Witness, and to confess the
Wisdom and Power, and Justice of God.
Let a Man that truly worshippeth and feareth
God, in such a time of dreadful and publick
Calamity as this is, applaud the Justice of
God, and freely confess his handy work,
and assign the notorious, publick, allowed,
and encouraged sins of the City and Nation;
for the meritorious and provoking Cause. It
may be a purblind thick sighted Beast,
whose God is his Belly, and whose Glory is
his Shame, that is drunk with Sensual Plea-
sure, *Phil. 9. 13.* will tell you that such a mor-
tality comes about in the revolution and circle
of so many years; and will rake the Kennel
for the Cause, and ascribe the effects to the

N naugh-

naughtiness of the Streets ; rather than to the
 naughtiness of their Hearts ; or look up to the
 true efficient , to whom these causes they
 usually fasten upon are but subservient ,
 and all , that they might hide their shame , and
 that they might perswade themselves and o-
 thers that their sin hath no hand in bringing
 such a scourge upon us ; but yet for all that ,
 when the Judgment comes a little nearer to
 them , and begins to find them out and a-
 waken them to *Consideration* , which they had
 no time for , when they were running from
 one brutish pleasure to another , then they
 begin to see , and to be confounded with shame .
 They cannot now laugh out of their Hearts
 all serious thoughts of a Life to come , nor
 make a jest of a Holy Life , as they did in the
 day of their delusion ; but would give a
 World , if they had it , to die the death of the
 Righteous . No wonder that strange and ex-
 traordinary Providences , whether they be of
 Mercy or Judgment , jostle the most sottish
 and inconsiderate Mind , and awaken it to
 think other thoughts of all things than they
 did before , and enforce an Heathenish , Earthly
 Mind , that spent all its thoughts upon va-
 nity before ; to say that all is but vanity ,
 and God's Favour is the only ground for true
 Contentment , if this good fit would last which
Consideration hath brought him to : But alas ,
 no sooner is the Providence over , that brought
 him to Consider , but he grows careless a-
 gain , and sleeps into Atheism ; and whilst
 things

things run in a constant Channel, and keep a constant course, God is not in all his thoughts, *Psal.* 10. 4. Now they think that Repentance and Faith, and Self-denial, are the work of Cowards, yes, and such as believe, that God hath as great hand in the orderly course and motion of things, as when they go out of order; and Water that is a fluid body and should run, stands still; and Fire that should burn, doth not. Let but a Man consider, and it's as easie to believe, that its as great a power must enable the Sun to run it's race, as to stand still or go backward; to preserve the Societies of Men, as destroy and waste them with a devouring Plague. All the difference is, Men now consider, that would not before, and conclude at least, that it's the safest course to live the Life of the Righteous, though there were no God; and oh that all would so conclude, and hold fast such a conclusion, and live accordingly; then they would quickly see more and more evidence of God in the Word, and the necessity of his Service, and the excellency of his ways, and rise up to a higher conclusion. That when, as before, they could say it was the safest way to renounce worldly Pleasure, and to mortifie their Lusts, and to addict themselves to the Love and Service of God; now they would be able to say, that it's perfect madness not to take this course. It's a Wisdom to be laughed at, to be wise for this Life, and neglect the Life to come. A little Consideration would shew the naked

ness of such pretended Wisdom; and among other helps, this of *Publick Calamity*, where Plague or Famine, or any extraordinary Judgment, sweeps away thousands, calls the rest to come and behold the works of the Lord, what Desolations he hath wrought among us, *Psal. 46. 10. Be still and know that I am God, I will be exalted among the People, I will be acknowledged by these careless and Atheistical Sinners*, ver. 11. And if the Lethargy of Mens Minds be not great, they will consider, those that were even lost before for want of attention to the Word and Works of God, will awaken now, or it's too much to be feared never; shall I call it therefore a Judgment or a Mercy, which the compassionate God hath sent upon this Nation, that gives us so much advantage to come to sober thoughts? Doth it not give some check whether we will or not, to the external acts of Pride, Luxury and Uncleaness, whereby the inward Acts are weakened; and we have time to reason with our selves, and are better disposed to consider, when freed from the clog of worldly cares, and from the fumes of a surfeited Body, overcharged with Meat and Drink, and from the flattering Friend that make us believe we are well, when our case is too much to be lamented; and God hath not left *this Town* altogether without this Mercy. If Consideration be so preparative to the highest Wisdom, and so necessary to the Knowledge and Love of God, and all solid Content and
Peace;

Peace; then all the means whereby it is promoted, should be welcome to us: And our Deafness to these Providences and *Inconsideracy*, notwithstanding we have so many advantages to bring us to Consideration of their miserable, woful condition, that forget God, hath the greater sin. This is the second help to Consideration, that should humble us for the neglect of it, *viz.* because we have so many advantages to awaken us to this duty.

Thirdly, As Consideration is a work of absolute necessity (where there is time and Capacity) in regard of the worth and greatness of the matters, which so much concern us; and in regard of the help and assistance that God gives us to this duty: so the Fruit and Benefits of Consideration are unspeakably great: *I shall name two*:

1. It is *Wisdom* to consider, yea, it's both a sign and a cause of it: where *Consideration* is, it argues there is *Wisdom* already, and the frequent exercise thereof will make the Person wiser; and both are intimated, *Psal. 107. 43. Whofo is wise will observe these things.* There *Consideration* is a sign of *Wisdom*; and *they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.* Here it is the cause, it produceth Understanding and *Wisdom* in a higher measure; so that *Wisdom* is both the antecedent and consequent of Consideration, and doth both go before

and follow after it. Sin in Scripture is frequently branded with the name of Folly, because it proceedeth from Folly, and maketh a Man more and more foolish that committeth it, *Psal. 85. 8. I will hear what God the Lord will speak; for he will speak peace unto his People, and to his Saints; but let them not turn again to folly (i.e.) Sin, Job 4. 18.* He charged his Angels with Folly, that is with Sin, and so threw them down to Hell. And they that are guilty of it are called *Fools* and *Foolish*, *Psal. 5. 5. The Foolish cannot stand in thy sight.* Who are they? the later clause telleth us, *Thou hatest all the workers of Iniquity.* And that it proceedeth from Folly from whence it is denominated, we have evidence enough in Scripture. *The Fool hath said in his Heart there is no God, Psal. 14. 1.* Where Atheism is ascribed to Folly, as the Fruit of it. First a Fool and then an Atheist; where by (Fool) is meant, not a Natural, or one that's born with a Crack or Defect in his Intellectuals, but one that's weak thorough wilful *Inconsideracy*, and by works of Darkness hath clouded and sotted his Understanding; as those in *Rom. 1. 21.* Whose foolish Heart was darkened by their vain Imaginations. So *Jer. 4. 22. My People is foolish, they have not known me.* The sense whereof may be so as to make Folly either the cause, or the effect of not knowing God (*viz.*) *Because my People are Foolish, therefore they know not me; or else because they are ignorant of me, therefore they are Foolish.* Now then,

then, as nothing doth more promote Folly than *Inconsideracy*; so nothing doth more befriend Wisdom than *Consideration*: It digs deep and finds out the bottom, and discovers the highest Cause of all things, which is the true Description of Wisdom contemplative; or as it is in the Understanding, for so the Schools define it. *Sapientia vera est, radicare de omnibus secundum altissimam Causam. Altissima autem Causa est Voluntas divina, sive lex qua voluntatem Dei, Hominibus manifestat.* When the careless inconsiderate Person, whom God hath blessed with Health, and Content, and Success, looks no higher than the Air he breaths in, to which he ascribes his Health, or the Estate he hath, to which he attributes his Content; or his own Prudence, to which he imputes his Success. On the other side, when the Inconsiderate Person, whom God hath afflicted, is pur-blind, and can see no farther than an unwholesome Air, a bad Dyet, an envious, troublesome Neighbour, or the general Contagion now among us, by the which he thinks he is afflicted in his Estate, Name or Health (I say) when the Inconsiderate Person, either in Prosperity or Adversity, stops here, and goes no further; the considerate Person is wise indeed, and looks above and beyond all these, and seeth the Spring that setteth all the Wheels a going, the primitive and overruling cause, that commands all the other.

1. Suitably to their own Nature.

2. And according to the counsel of his own will. In the one appears his admirable *Wisdom*, in the other his *Almighty Power*. And according to this judgment of things, he is both affected and instructed, and therefore his Heart is not lifted up with Pride; but thankfulness unto God when he is enriched with his Mercies, and the Streams wherewith he is refreshed, set his Heart a longing for the Fountain. This effect upon *David* had all his temporal Mercies; they made him cry out for the Living God, *Psal. 84. 2. My Soul thirsteth for God, for the Living God; when shall I come and appear before God?* *Psal. 42. 2.* And this influence they will have in a sincere degree and measure upon all true Believers; neither will they make any sinful haste to get away from the Rod, when God sendeth it; they know nothing can come without his special appointment. And therefore though Troubles flow in upon him, and come toward him like a swelling Tide, and threaten to swallow him up; though Enemies come upon him with Rage and Fury; and the Devil and his own Corruption come upon him like a Tempest, as if they would bear down and utterly overwhelm him, yet in this he is confident, he cannot utterly sink if he be a Believer. Though a sinner doth evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know that it shall be well with them that
fear

fear God, which fear before him; but it shall not be well with the wicked, neither shall he prolong his days, which are as a shadow, because he feareth not God, *Eccles. 8. 12, 13.* So *Esay 3. 10.* *Say ye to the Righteous, it shall be well with him, for they shall eat the fruit of their doings.* And as Consideration is the direct way to Wisdom, which is in the Understanding; so it is a ready way to that other Wisdom, which is in the practical Faculties. This Wisdom the Schools define to be, *Habitus discretivus optimi Finis, & Electivus optimorum mediorum.* Such a habit as disposeth a Man to discern and intend the best end, and to elect the best means. The highest end that an inconsiderate Man doth intend, is no higher than the World; it is at best but some Sensual Comfort, some Carnal Satisfaction, that's fitted to his baser part, and does no better service than accommodate his Flesh. I confess, his Soul also may seem to be content, whilst he hath a fulness of Earthly Prosperity; but that's but a meer negative, and no positive Act, whereas true Contentment is something positive. And that Soul that hath it, doth not only hold its peace, and say nothing to the contrary, but with deliberation speaketh Peace to a Man, upon the surest and most infallible grounds. The plain truth is, the Soul of an ambitious and voluptuous Worldling, may seem to be satisfied and acquiesce, if he hath what the World can afford him, because he doth not believe or consider,

consider, *The end of all things is at hand*, 1 Pet. 4. 7. But sense hath a full mastery over him, being gratified to the full, and doth make the Mind drunk, that it cannot make an impartial enquiry into the worth of what the Man for the present is so much pleased with. O if such a one did consider and believe, he would like his condition worse than that of the vilest Begger. He could not look into the Word of God and see such dreadful passages against those that have their Affections set upon the World and Pleasures thereof, nor read the terrible Description of those Men that have the Riches of this World, and are not rich towards God, *Luke 12. 21.* and not tremble, and even throw away such Earthly Luggage, that is such an impediment in the way to Salvation, if he could not be otherwise rid of it.

And as the inconsiderate Mans great and principal End is no higher, so he is as foolish and void of Understanding in his choice of the means whereby he would attain his End. Alas, that ever Men that have such excellent parts and means for their Improvement, that are bred up to more Understanding than other Men, should so disparage their very Reason and Judgment, as to think that Hawking and Hunting, and Carding and Dicing, and Court-
ing and Feasting, and such like Courses, should bring a Man to Content and Happiness. If they did but consider, they could not possibly
judge

judge this, unless their Reason were besotted, and there were some considerable flaw in their understanding Faculty. I deny not, but in reference to their intended End, they have made a wise and prudent choice, and hit upon the fittest means. Their end being the pleasing of the Flesh, what can they do more wisely than to make provision for it, to fulfil the Lusts and Desires thereof, *Rom. 13. 14.* and to live at Ease? And so the Children of this World, as our Saviour hath affirmed, are wiser in their Generation than the Children of Light, *Luke 16. 8.* Their end (though by accident) being to lose the Life which is to come, what can they do more shrewdly than to save this present Life? Since their end is to destroy their Souls, can they take a more prudent course than to love the World and the things of the World, and keep all thoughts of a future state out of their Minds, as much as may be, lest they should be converted and saved? *This their way is their folly, Psal. 49.*
13.

But the Man that *Considers* will look higher, and be sure to project for all Eternity, and make nothing his chief End but what will never fail; and therefore hath a wiser reach than the most applauded admired Wit that is Earthly Minded. And he is as wise in the choice of the means whereby he makes towards his End; they being no other than what God himself hath prescribed, and therefore can never mis-
carry;

carry ; his End is to save his Life for ever ; and therefore he will venture to lose it here , *Matth. 10. 39.* His end is to get him Everlasting Honour , and to embalm his Name to all Eternity , and therefore he doth rejoyce when Men revile him and speak all evil of him falsely for Christs sake. Thus you see , that *Consideration* maketh a Man truly and solidly wise. This is the first benefit of *Consideration*.

2. *Consideration* is a work accompanied with the sweetest Pleasure and Contentment. The meer agitation and exercise of the Intellectual is sweet to one that knows how to employ them. But when moreover the Objects of the Mind are such as do enlighten , purifie , and rejoyce the Heart , such a Man , if he know how to manage the work , must needs advance himself to a high degree of pleasure. The reason why some Christians grow weary and faint in the Service of God , and walk heavily in the bitterness of their Souls , a great part of their Life , if not all , is because they do not more frequently approach the Fountain of Joy and Gladness in their Meditations of him , and do not so well consider the evil of Sin to forsake it more heartily , nor clear up their interest in Christ , and Evidences for Heaven by daily *Consideration*. Were these things better considered , they would be better known , and what a pleasure would it be , to think upon God and Heaven , and Christ , if we had but
an interest in them ? Thus
you

you see some of the fruits of *Consideration*.

Fourthly, As the benefits of *Consideration* are unspeakably great, so the mischiefs of *Inconsideracy* are as sad.

1. God threatens it heavily, *Psal.* 28. 5. *Because they consider (or gaud) not the works of the Lord, nor the operation of his Hands, he will destroy them and not build them up.* כִּי לֹא יִבְנוּ אֱל-פִי־עֲלֹתָיִם. *Because they did not understand in the Original, for Consideration and Understanding are so near a kin, that they are both expressed by the same word; and* *Esay* 5. 12, 13. *And the Harp, and the Viol, and the Tabret, are in their Feasts, but they regard not the Work of the Lord, nor consider the operation of his Hands. So* *Hos.* 7. 2. *They consider not in their Hearts that I remember all their Wickedness; now their own doings have beset them about, they are before my Face. Neither doth he barely threaten, some Execution is done; Job* 34. 26, 27. *He striketh them as wicked Men, in the open sight of others; and the Reason follows, because they turned back from him, and would not consider any of his ways.*

2. It's an Argument of Brutishness and Folly, *Psal.* 92. 5, 6. *O Lord, how great are thy Works, and thy Thoughts very deep!* אִישׁ בָּצֵר. *A Man that's led by Lust and not by Reason (we render it a Brutish Man) knoweth not, neither doth a Fool understand or consider this.*

this. As it is Reason and Understanding that makes a Man differ from a Brute, and become more excellent than a Beast ; so Consideration is nothing else but the use of his Reason, without which he must needs live like a Beast. To speak plainly, he that will not use his Reason and consider, and so live like a Man that should be guided by this higher Principle ; he will be guided by a lower Principle, and be led by Sense and Feeling, as a Beast is. And a little that is present and felt, shall weigh more with such a one, than one that's to come, though ten times greater. Hence it is, that though God threaten a wicked Man, and one that lives by sense, with Hell and Damnation, it hath no force nor power with him to restrain his Corruption, because he feels it not, though he might as certainly foresee it, as that which he now feels. And he will do more to be rid of the Tooth-ach, or some present Affliction, than to prevent one that's a thousand times greater. Is he guided by Reason or Sense, and doth he live like a Man that hath Understanding, or like a Brute that hath none, that will take more care and pains, and be at more cost, to be freed from present Pain and Sickness, and to get out of Poverty or Hardship, when it pincheth him, and to throw off any present Burthen that he feels himself oppressed with, than to escape the Damnation of Hell, though he must otherwise most certainly feel it ere long? Judge impartially, whether this be not, to be like the

the Horse and Mule, and other meer sensitive *Palm.* }
 Creatures, that have no Understanding. Let *32.9.* }
 them have what they have at present, and feel
 no present Pain, and you please them well
 enough, though you feed them for the Slaughter.
 You cannot Shoe an Ox, unless you bind and
 cast him down and force him, though it be to
 keep his Feet from hurt. Your Horse is not
 pleased when you let him Blood, though it
 save his Life, because you hurt them for the
 present.

The Man that considers not, will be too like
 these Brutish Creatures, and run into Eter-
 nal Misery, to avoid a little present Affliction.
 Moreover,

3. It's an Argument of Pride not to Consi-
 der, *Psal. 10. 4. The wicked through the pride*
of his Countenance, will not seek after God,
God is not in all his thoughts; thy Judgments are
far above out of his sight. God hath set Hea-
 ven and Earth before him, and set such va-
 riety of things on purpose to be Considered.
 And the Inconsiderate Man shuts his Eyes, and
 will not behold the Glory of the Lord, nor
 give him the Honour due to his Name. If
 it be foolish Pride to undervalue any Creature,
 what Arrogancy is it to despise and overlook
 the most absolute and perfect Being, things
 of the highest value, and most worthy our
 Observation?

Fifthly,

Fifthly, It's easie to Consider ; your Thoughts will run some way, whether you will or not. The Soul of Man is a busie active thing, and will not be idle, it will rather be impertinently employed, than not at all; and the bare work of thinking is no hard matter. It's rather a work of difficulty to restrain them, especially from the things that we have the highest Love and Respect for. If God and thy Soul were valued and loved by thee above all other things, as they must be if thou art a Christian at the Heart, thou couldst not but think, and think again, how to please the one and save the other. If things that are more worth than the whole Frame of Heaven and Earth, and all that's visible to the Eyes, are not worthy thy most prizing, pleasing Thoughts, they are worth nothing; and if thou thinkest so, thou art either an ignorant Sot or an Atheist. It's a cheap purchase to gain the highest Wisdom and the Love of God, and to save thy Soul for ever, at the expence of a few sober, serious thoughts. If you stick at Consideration, which it must cost you if ever you be saved; you judge your selves unworthy of Eternal Life. It's easie enough to you to turn your Thoughts to an Object of Gain or Pleasure; and is there any greater Gain than to save your Souls? What will it profit you to win the whole World and lose your Souls? *Mat. 16. 26.* It's a rational question that the greedy Heart of Man shall never be able to answer, without Self-condemnation, if he run
his

his Soul upon destruction; though he should get to be the happiest man upon Earth. O unhappy Soul, that couldst consider and Judge no better! Wast thou master of no more Brains and Wit, than what could inform thee how to Feed and Trick up thy Carkas, and commend it to the Eyes of a few dying men? And to live in a little Credit, whilst thou art aboveground, though thy Name stink for ever afterwards? Was this the upshot of all thy Thoughts? Couldst thou think to better for thy poor Soul! that might be Eternally Happy; if you would not fly consideration, but turn your Thoughts to those things for which God gave to you your faculty to Think. O remember, that it's easie and very natural to consider how you may save your Soul, if you werenot become unnatural and cruel to your selves. And it will shame you unto the deepest silence; when God shall ask you: Why you did not *Consider* of those things, when the matters were so great, and the work so easie.

Sixthly, You will consider when it is too late, and wish that you had made more hast, when it would have done you good. It would not be such a perfect degree of madness, in us not to consider, how wonderfully God hath made us, how deeply we stand Indebted to him, for no less than all that we have, or hope for; and how wickedly we have departed from him, and what our sin hath deserved, and what our Saviour hath done, save us from the woful consequents thereof; it would not be so

O

absurd

absurd to put these Thoughts out of our Minds now, if we could always keep them out. But in the latter end we shall consider, *Jer.* 23. 20. It would not be so great a sin to be inconsiderate now, if we could be ever so: But alas! stupidity, and insensibleness of such things as these, is the disease only of this present Life; and will last no longer than the day of Grace: And woe to us a thousand times if it last so long: But when the day of Mercy is past, be stupid if thou canst, and harden thy heart against such Thoughts if thou art able. Consideration is now our duty, and the fittest instrument to show us the evil of Sin and the worth of Grace; but if it be here neglected, it shall be our punishment hereafter, and the most cruel instrument to torment us. Believe it then, we shall passionately wish that we had considered a little sooner, and had let these things sink into our hearts: O that we had pondered them whilst we had the day! But now the fearful night is come upon us, and we are Sentenced everlastingly to such dismal Thoughts! If we had spent a few serious Thoughts what this misery is to which we are now condemned, we had escaped these Torments. If we had considered what it is to be punished with everlasting destruction, from the presence of the Lord, and from the Glory of his power, *2Thes.* 1. 9. and to be forsaken of all comfort for ever; we had not been now pouring forth these bitter cries and complaints: But alas! what are they now worth, who regardeth them, or is moved to any the least

compassion towards: Yea the righteous God will laugh at your calamity, *Prov.* 1. 26. and the Saints will praise him; and say, Righteous art thou, O Lord, in the Sentence which thou hast passed, in the Judgment which thou hast executed, *Psal.* 119. 137. Thou hast poured forth thy wrath and indignation on them, and given them gall and bitterness to drink, for they are worthy. You shall then wish that your faculty to consider were gone; it will follow you so close, and be such a perpetual honour to you; or rather that you had never had reason and understanding to consider, then you might have both liv'd and died like a beast: Whereas now, though you have liv'd like a beast, that you must die like a man that hath Memory, Reason, Foresight, Judgment and Affections, that will all conspire together to overwhelm you with eternal shame. Why had I reason, will the Soul say then, but to prevent this misery? Why had I will to choose, when Life and Death were set before me, and could choose no better? Had it not been a wiser course to have troubled my self a little while with some few Thoughts of it, then now to feel it for ever? Why did God threaten Hell and destruction in his Word, and set it forth with so much Terrour to mine apprehensions, but that I might consider and escape it? Why did he appoint the Ministerial Office; but that knowing the Terrours of the Lord, they might perswade men? *2 Cor.* 5. 11. What could nothing prevail with one, but what I now feel, and must forever undergo?

Think not to say then, I had not time to consider, neither had I skill to follow such a work as this: It's not so much a knowing Head, as an honest Heart that's required to this work. The Truths are but few and plain that thy Heart is to dwell upon, and the certainty of them is beyond all doubt and question: Whatever difference of Opinion there may be in other things, yet here is no controversy; all are agreed, that man hath an Immortal Soul; that there is a Life to come: That the Happiness of man lies in these two things.

1. In being like to God. 2. In loving him, and being loved by him; that sin hath made us unlike to him, and therefore must be repented of: That Christ will purge away their guilt and sin, and renew them by his Spirit, that love him, and consent to be ruled by him, and will take him for their Physician: That there is a day in which God will summon all the World before him, and Judge them Impartially, according as they have believed, or not believed in Christ, to everlasting joy or misery. These things are certain in the highest degree; and there is none that doubts of any of them, but either an Atheist, or an Infidel: These are the Truths, that God hath revealed to us in great mercy and compassion to our Souls, and commanded every one, Learned and Unlearned, Poor and Rich, to Consider and think upon when they are sitting in their House, when they are walking in the way, when they lye down, and when they rise up; and to teach them dili-
gently

gently to their Children, and to live as those that do believe and consider them.

Woe to the man or woman that considers not these things, good it had been for him or her if they had never been born: Wilt thou not think of those things? It is because thou art void of understanding, and hast chose the way of destruction: If thou wilt not be perswaded now to consider, thou wilt forget thy latter end, thou wilt forget thine Immortal Soul, and God will be forgotten, and a little sensual pleasure will weigh more with thee, than Eternal Life and Happiness: And when the day of thy distress is come upon thee, thou wilt wish that thou hadst rather forgot to eat thy Bread, than these things should have been forgotten; and to fill up thy measure, and make thee perfectly miserable, God will forget thee forever.

*Pfal. 50. 22. Now consider this ye
that forget God, lest I take you
in peices, and there be none to
deliver.*

I Have set some of the Motives before you that should stir you up to Consideration, and shewed you in part what a mischief it is for this faculty to lie dead, which is given us by God to quicken those that are dead, to the Life of Grace and Holiness, and to make them strong and lively, and vigorous Christians that are quickened by the spirit of Christ, and have set their affections upon things above, and not upon things here on Earth. This is the way that God hath prescribed for Rational Creatures to get home to God, that are revolted from him; and to recover their affections to the right owner, that are intangled in the love of Earth and vanity: If they would but consider, would feed upon Swinish pleasures no longer; nor suffer their Souls to be charmed with more delusion, nor prefer the imaginary dream of a sluggard, before the happiness of a man that is awake, and whose eyes are open: *Consideration* would shew such a man the difference between Earth and Heaven, rectify his judgment in this great point, (*viz.*) where mans happiness lies: And tell him roundly how the world hath cheated him with more shews
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and phantastick pleasures, and put a picture into his hand instead of real felicity: It would clear his Eye-sight, and make him quite of another mind, than once he was, when *Inconsideracy* had blinded him, and the world had befooled him; and he would see much more reason to live in the love of God, looking for the mercies of his Redeemer unto eternal Life, *Jude the 21.* than ever he did to live in carnal love and delights: *Consideration* would bring the world and all its pleasures as much into disgrace, as ever *Inconsideracy* brought them into credit: And men that snatch'd at the riches and vain glory of the world before, as a sweet bit to be purchased upon any terms, would after they are enlightened by *Consideration*, suspect all its soberest pleasures, and those that come in upon the fairest terms: What a Confession should you have from such a man of the foolishness and madness of his former Conversation, when he liv'd upon Air and Trash, as other *Inconsiderate* men still do? Such a one as *Paul's, Tit. 3. 3.* *For we ourselves* (saith he, describing his state before *Consideration* undeceived him) *were sometimes foolish, disobedient, deceived, serving divers lusts and pleasures;* Then you should hear him bitterly accuse and condemn the soberest course he formerly took, when the World had the Supremacy in his mind and heart: Strange it would be to see a man so much altered for the better, and advanced to such an improvement in knowledge and vertue, as by impartial, sober and considerate Thoughts might be done: He was, it may be, before a covetous, busie world'ling, that scrap'd and dig'd his happiness out of the dirt, and laid it up on Earth; *Whose*

God was his belly, whose glory was his shame, that minded Earthly things, Phil. 3. 19. But now his conversation is in Heaven, and there he hath laid up his Treasure; *And digs for Wisdom as for Silver, and searcheth for it as for hid Treasure*, Prov. 2. 4. *And his delight is among the Saints, and such as excel in wisdom*, Psal. 16. 3. O what a blessing hath God bestowed upon the man or woman to whom he hath given a considering mind: How quickly is such a man promoted, and brought to unspeakable honour; yea to find approbation with God! Such a man is quickly higher by head and shoulders (as its said of *Saul*) than the rest of the inconsiderate doting World: *I have more understanding (saith David) than all my teachers, for thy Testimonies are my meditation*, Psal. 119. 99. You that are yet captivated to the love of any thing here on Earth, and like to perish in that state. If you will but attentively consider what you dote upon, and what you venture for it, you would perceive your danger, and certainly make your escape, and feel the vertue of this excellent duty of *Consideration*: And your present content, would make you sick of your former delight: And the Honourablest men on earth, that had not feasted on this food, would seem to you but vile and contemptible persons: Methinks I see the man recovered by *Consideration*, taking up his parablelike *Balaam*, and saying, *Thus saith the man whose eyes consideration hath opened; He saith, who hath heard the words of God, and seen the Vision of the Almighty: How goodly are the Tents in which God dwelleth, and the tabernacles of their hearts where God hath his habitation: As the Valleys are*
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they spread forth, as Gardens by the Rivers side; as the Trees of Lign-Aloes which the Lord hath planted, and as Cedar Trees besides the waters, Numb. 24. 3, 4, 5 6.

And as *Consideration* would recover the dead, and bring them out of the Grave of Ignorance and Corruption, and shew them the excellency of Divine wisdom and purity; so that it would keep them in breath that are already translated from death to life, and inspire fresh vigour and cheerfulness into all their services; it would fill their hearts with a burning love to God, and make their lives as a shining light before men: It would strengthen their faith and fortify their hopes, and put a fresh complexion upon their must withering and consumptive Graces; and make their heart to abound and run over with joy and gladness. By this time, no doubt you see something of the worth and excellency of *Consideration*, and what a gainful trade it is: Will you therefore bend your minds to consider, and spend more of your time in this work? I know the corrupted heart of man is backward to this exercise, though it be of such flat necessity, and of such eternal advantage; yea, though it breed so much delight and pleasure, after we have gotten some skill, and made some progress in the work, and have gotten some power over our own affections, and can bespeak them in the most suitable moving way: For cure therefore of this backwardness, I have given you some quickning Considerations, to stir you up to this duty; and to gain the consent of your wills to this necessary duty.

In hopes therefore that you are convinced of
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the necessity of the duty, and fully resolved on the performance ; and that you will not neglect such a duty any longer, nor stand in the way of your own light and comfort. I come next to give you some *Help and Assistance* for the more comfortable and successful management and performance of the work. And,

First, Endeavour to your power, to shun all Impediments, but especially those that are most likely to stupify and unfit your minds for Consideration, they are obvious, I need only to put you in remembrance.

First, Take heed that you sin not maliciously, (1.) with Wilfulness and Presumption : For Divines usually distinguish of *Three sorts of Sins*. 1. Sins of Ignorance, when through want of knowledge, we transgress the Law of God, and do that unwittingly, which if we had known to be a violation of the Law of God, we would not have done. 2. Sins of Infirmity, such as are committed through the unavoidableness, unruliness of our Sense, Phantasy or Passion, which are not wholly under the power and command of Reason, no not when it is truly enlightned and sanctified. 3. Such as are committed with Knowledge and Deliberation, when it is in our power to avoid them, and will not ; what these are, I need not inform you, every one may be his own judge : These last sort are called by some, *Sins of Malice* ; and how much such sins as these will hinder all duty, as well as *Consideration*, there is no Christian of any experience, but knows too well : And therefore *David* prayeth especially against such sins as these, *Psal.* 19. 13. *Keep back thy servant from Pre-*

Presumptuous Sins, *let them not have dominion over me; then shall I be upright and innocent from the great transgression*: If thou hast any good affection to this duty, and art convinc'd, that thy Soul will certainly perish without frequent serious consideration; thou hast need to take heed of such sins as these: Believe it, these will wound thy Conscience, break thy inward peace, mightily provoke the Lord, and draw away the Spirit from thee, and fill thee with disturbing fears, and besot thy mind, that it shall not be fit for Consideration; or if not, such sins as these will dispose thee to hide thy self, and get into thee dark and sly consideration, as that which will discover thy shame, and make thee odious to thy self: Never think to bend thy mind to an impartial consideration of God and his Attributes, and the Equity of Laws, nor to think of thy latter end, and the life to come, to any purpose, or to hear a right answer from thy Soul, when thou puttest the question whether it be sanctified or un sanctified, whilst thou givest thy consent, and allowest thy self to live in any known sin. I may say of *Consideration*, as Mr. Bolton said of *Prayer*, *That it will make thee leave such presumptuous sinning*; Or else such sins will make thee to cast off *Consideration*; you may as well hope to reconcile light and darkness, as to bring these to any agreement. Where *Consideration* is in any strength, there will be no wilful sin, or else Hell it self: Art thou one that allowest thy self in the habitual neglect of any known duty? Canst thou freely indulge thy self in any unjust or ungodly practice? Are thy Thoughts at liberty to think vainly and wickedly without curb or controll? Is
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thy Tongue at liberty to utter falshood and deceit, to call evil good, or good evil, to plead any unrighteous causes, or to disgrace any way that thou knowest in thy Conscience God approveth of? Art thou wilfully proud, or uncharitable; and art thou intemperate in thy Appetite, or Passions, or commonly guilty of any such sin, that thy own Conscience doth condemn? No wonder then if *Consideration* be an unpleasant work to thee, and if thy Thoughts turn away from him that abhorreth all iniquity, but that especially which is wilful and allowed: It is no marvel that Meditation is seldom or never, in the word of the Lord that condemneth such practices, as you can allow and approve, and sets a black mark upon all those in whom there is any reigning sin: Take heed sin committed with deliberation and allowance is not far from it, for one such sin mightily disposeth to another; and where once such sins are ordinary and habitual, it shews that sin hath gotten the dominion: But the mind will not be so averse to thy duty, that hath a respect to all the Commandments, and that doth not give toleration to any one sin, that it knows to be such, but doth confess shame himself for, strive and Pray against every corruption that he is conscious to himself of: I know some difficulty there will be after all, but yet such as will easily yield, and be overcome, when once this grand impediment is removed: And no sin hath your allowance and consent, but is seriously rejected and opposed.

2dly. The next great enemy to this necessary duty of *Consideration*, is a fond and inordinate delight in any thing here on earth: For where there is such a doting love, your Thought will be continually at
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the command of that beloved object, and all the other Affections will be still imployed under the command of that doting love: If it be something in present possession, your heart will be dayly with it; or if it be off a little while, it is not at rest; or else it's doing something that may root this inordinate love, and make it faster and stronger; its main care is to keep fast hold, and its only fear is lest it should be deprived of it. And Consideration there will be little or none, unless it be to keep out the light of those Truths that would spoile the pleasure of such an Idolized comfort. Possibly there may be in such a heart some Thoughts of God and the Life to come, especially in those that are frequently told, and in part convinced of the necessity of such Thoughts; but whilst such a foolish love prevaieth, such Thoughts will come to nothing, and be made of none effect; or if the heart be thus inordinatly set upon a thing, that is not yet in its possession; thy desires will be so eager and impatient after it, that there will be neither time nor room for such *Consideration* as I am now perswading thee to, whilst thy mind is disturbed and vexed with such insolent Passions as these; you may easily imagine, with what Tergverlation and backwardness it will come to such a work as this, as doth discover that sinfulness and folly of them: Every thing naturally seeketh its own preservation; and so we must expect that lust will do also, it will keep possession so long as it's able; its hard to pursue any worldly pleasure with heat and passion, and at the same time to

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enter upon any serious *Consideration* of the vanity of it; it's not easie to let the affections loose upon any sinful and unlawful delights, and with all to consider impartially at the same time, the fearfulness of Gods displeasure against such practices: There's nothing can be well done, where Love doth not lead the way; and how can Spiritual love prevail, where Carnal Earthly love hath got dominion: I know God can bring such a man to *Consideration*, that hath captivated his heart to some Earthly delight, otherwise it were hard to think how he could be brought to Repentance; but then usually the strength and vehemency of the affection is abated, either by the power of Gods Word, or some affliction or other, before the mind will be brought to any sober *Consideration*: But yet I say, whilst such inordinate love is in exercise and strength, it will keep out *Consideration*, and set the heart against it. So that if such a one would have his mind at liberty to *Consider*, he must draw the Fewel that feedeth Affection, and weaken it by a resolved Abstinence from that which is its nourishment, and submit to any afflictions that God sendeth for his help, and be glad of such a blessed advantage to bring him to his right mind again, otherwise that work of *Consideration* will go but heavily on; especially when the things to be considered are so much of another nature, and so opposite to all Carnal, Fleishly love and delights whatsoever.

Thirdly, Another great hindrance to *Consideration*, will be the Company and Talk of more worldly men: You shall be sure to meet with
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nothing from such Fellowship as this that will animate and quicken you to such Thoughts as these ; if your mind be never so little disposed to meditate in the Law of God, and think of a future reckoning and account, and to examine what preparation is made towards it; you shall find enough in their Frothy, Idle, Impertinent, or Simul discourse to quench such Thoughts, and to bend your mind quite another way; but nothing to promote or set forwards any good inclination or desire: Alas, the heart of man is naturally too backward to Sober and Impartial *Consideration* of the most concerning matters, that we have need of all the help we can get to put the mind in such Heavenly frame and temper, and need not any thing to pull back and discourage: It's necessary to retire from the company and converse of those that are good, when we would attend this work to any purpose, much more from the Society of men whose Tongues are continually employed about vanity and sin: But if thou wouldst be fit for the *Consideration* that I am pressing on thee, avoid such Company as this, not only when thou art more solemnly addressing thy self to this work, but also at other times also: For such Companions will be storing thy mind with such empty notions and impressions as will pervert it, and keep out such matter that should furnish and supply it for the successful performance of this duty: O how doth the Chatt and foolish Talk of Idle Light-headed men damp any good Seed in thee, and weaken all good affections! and there-

therefore must needs be a deadly enemy to the *Consideration* which should be promoted thereby: I appeal to those that have their Ears continually filled with discourse about the matters of this Life, about their Flocks and their Herds, and their Lands and their Trades, where the Fair is to day, and where the Market is to Morrow, and what News is stirring (to say no worse) how hard is it to get any Reverential Thoughts of God, or any affecting apprehensions of the Life to come: It is no easie matter to get thy heart affected with thy sin, and the mischief it hath done thee, and that woful state and condition of those that die in it, when thy discourse is altogether of another nature. But if the discourse be Wanton, Obscene, Prophane, and much more if it be Atheistical, and intended to the scorn and derision of Holiness, or any of the means God hath appointed to promote it; what impression this is like to make upon the Hearers, I wish you never know by experience: Woe to the persons that use the Talents God hath given them to such a wicked purpose, and serve the Devil so openly in the world; and that are employed as his Agents, not only to destroy themselves, but to pervert and destroy the Souls of others with whom they have any fellowship; I would not be in the condition of those that go down to the Grave with the guilt of such a sin on them for all the World: If as the Apostle tells us, *He that converteth a sinner from the evil of his way, shall save his Soul from death, and hide multitude of sins*, James 5. 23. What reward

reward shall be given unto thee thou false tongue, *Psal.* 120. 3. that studieth to convert a sinner to the error of thy ways, and to bring his soul to death? what shall be done unto thee, that dost in plain terms, or else by cunning Fetches endeavour to discourage thy brother from prayer, meditation in the word of God, and consideration of the life to come? If you have any belief of the life to come and compassion for your souls, avoid the company of such persons as much as you can, and stop your ears to such discourses, or rather openly declaim against them and rebuke the persons roundly, that are such enemies to the salvation of mens souls, and consequently to all the means that should promote and bring it to pass, amongst which Consideration is none of the least.

Fourthly, see that you carefully shun too much occupation in worldly affairs: If your thoughts be much entangled with the matters of the world, they will be very unfit for the consideration of such weighty serious things which you must think upon, till you are affected with them more than all other matters that meerly concern this life, or else wish that God had never given you a thinking faculty. *Be still and know that I am God, so we render it, Psal.* 46. 10. But in the Hebrew it is *הָרָפוּ וְרָעוּ כִּי-אֱנוֹכִי אֱלֹהִים* (1.) Desist from, and remit your other employments and consider that I am God: For the Verb *רָפוּ* in *Hiph*, signifies, *Desistere, Ab-sistere, Remittere.* (1.) To desist, to leave off or remit: If worldly matters be too busie in your heads, spiritual and eternal things cannot be

considered, nor thought upon as they ought. You may as well walk upright with a Mountain on your backs, as erect your thoughts Heaven-ward, whilst they are incumbred with the world. Though slight and trivial business may be transacted in a Croud, yet when we have matters of weight and moment, we then chuse silence and retirement. Let me tell you there's nothing of such consequence as those things that are to fall under our consideration: And do you think a mind distract^d with worldly cares is fit for such a work as this? It is not easie to be affected with the eye of God that's ever on us, and to stand always in awe of him, unless frequent, serious consideration make way. And who can do that, that hath one worldly business or another perpetually in his mind? And is even burthened and oppressed with such thoughts. As the eye of the body is disturbed by the violent motion of the Wind or Air; so the eye of the understanding is more perturbed, by busie, confused and tumultuous thoughts: And although they that have their heads continually exercised and imployed in worldly business are very subject to such confusion and disorder, yet even those also that have not their hands very much imployed, may have their hearts in continual disturbance, and agitation, and may have as little vacancy and leisure for such consideration, as those that are over head and ears in the World, and are as busie all the day long as if they were labouring for a Crown or Kingdom. It is an unvaluable mercy to have a free composed and undisturbed mind, and to have

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have vacancy and leisure to ask a mans self what he is doing? and whether it will yield him comfort when he is passing out of the World? Many have bitterly repented them that they have had so many Irons in the Fire, and that with *Martha*, they have been *careful and solicitous for many things*, whilst they have neglected the *one thing necessary*, *Luke 10. 41*. Let their Repentance be a warning unto us that the oppressing cares of the world do not either prevent or else smother and choke better thoughts.

Fifthly, Another grand obstruction to the work of necessary consideration, is pride, in all the kinds thereof: As God deals with pride, so pride deals with him; He looks upon the proud, and the proud look upon him afar off; or rather he regardeth them not at all, nor they him: The wicked through the pride of his countenance will not consider and seek after God; *God is not in all his thoughts, Psal. 10. 4*. His wayes are alwayes grievous to him. *They are far above out of his sight, Vers. 5*. Though the proud man looketh too high, yet not high enough (you see) to take God into his consideration, who should be the principal object of it. There is none that standeth at a greater distance from God, both Actively and Passively by way of sin and punishment, than the proud person. Though the heart that's lifted up with pride beareth it self so high, yet not high enough for such a work as consideration is, that is to be exercised in the highest matters: It's true both pride and consideration are of an aspiring nature, and yet you can

scarce name two things that are more inconsistent. The one seeks the vanishing breath and applause of men; The other is ambitious of God's approbation: The one reacheth after the pomp and glory of the Earth; and the other soares after the riches and glory of Heaven: And as pride lifteth up the flesh; so consideration doth enable and advance the spirit. Now he that is gotten up to the Top of wordly pride and greatness, is far more indisposed to consider the high Attributes of God and his glorious perfections; and the life to come, and the joys of Heaven; than he that is cast down and humbled by wordly poverty and shame; he hath a better prospect into the Heavenly Kingdom and Glory; and seeth more of the Majesty of God, and the splendour and dignity of his Servants, that is placed low in the world, than he that is got upon a Pinnacle, or stands upon the Mountain of wordly honour and felicity. There is no man that is the least acquainted with the Word of God, but will easily conceive, that a humble lowly spirit hath more clear, distinct, affecting apprehensions of the highest things, than the proud and most lofty spirit. Men think to advance themselves to honour by such a spirit as this; but it's certainly true, that nothing doth more debale them. So true is it, that Solomon affirmeth, that the wicked way is a deceitful work. *Prov. 1. 18.* As pride is an enemy to all grace whatsoever, so it is a deadly enemy to consideration; for there's nothing would more effectually shame and disgrace it than consideration would; and therefore it saith of it, as *Ahab* or *Micah*, I hate it, for it never prophesieth good concerning me, but evil, *1 King 22. 8.*

A little sober, serious consideration would quickly tell a man, what a *worm he is*, as *David* saith *and no man*, *Psal*, 22. 6. and what little cause he hath to swell and be lifted up; and therefore while he hath a mind to be great in his own eyes, and in the eyes of others he will not consider: 'Tis not possible for a proud man whilst he continues to be such, to let his mind loose to impartial consideration and meditation in the Word and Works of God: He will quickly *stumble at this Rock of Offence*, and *dish his foot against the Cross of Christ*, and despise the humility and poverty of spirit that is such an essential property to all his true Disciples, and Followers, *Isa*, 8. 14. and *Rom*. 9. 32. As ever you would have your minds free for consideration, without which it is not possible to be wise to salvation; take heed of an insolent, haughty mind, for such a one is always an unteachable mind. 'Tis the humble that God hath promised to dwell with, and teach; The rest will not be taught, but say to the Almighty, *depart from us*, *we desire not the knowledge of thy ways*, *Job*, 21. 14. It's a deep sence of emptiness and thirst after happiness that makes way for consideration: but they that are full and happy in their own account, have no need of it, nor will be brought to consider that they are *poor and miserable, and blind and naked*, *Rev*. 3. 17. And yet without consideration they are lost for ever; for there is no surer way than inconsideracy to the greatest poverty and shame.

Sixthly, If you would tast the pleasure, and partake of the great profit that consideration would be sure to bring along with it, set your self in

Good earnest against a fickle, flothful Spirit; I put these both together, because I would not multiply particulars too far. It is the natural disease of man's Soul since it hath forsaken God, either to sit still and pine away in sloth and negligence, or else to wander up and down from one variety to another; both these extremes are too incident to the perverted nature of man, & stand in very great opposition to the duty of Consideration: our corrupted minds are very prone, either to sleep securely, or else to dream and wander about; either to be altogether idle, or busie to no purpose. They are both Feaverish Distempers of the Soul, only one is the hot, and the other is the cold Fit; but they are both far enough from that sound and even Constitution, wherein the health of the Soul doth consist. The great difficulty of consideration lies in the aversness of our hearts to any fixed, serious thoughts of any thing, much more of God and the life to come, and matters of that nature: The mind is of a wandering nature, and quickly weary of continued, pertinent, orderly thoughts of any thing: but yet those that have overcome that fickleness of a roving mind as to other things, yet are backward enough to think with pertinency, life and affectiveness upon spiritual and eternal things; It's easie to let the mind wander from one object to another, and very suitable to the fickle, mutable nature of man, that having left God, is become most unlike him. This is the temper of the greatest part of the world; whose minds are become like a queazy or wanton stomack, that must taste of this and that, & the other dish, and cannot keep to any one,

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so their minds and affections are now after this thing, presently after another; and are more alterable than the wind or weather. First, They are sick for this or that beloved Object, and then by and by they are sick of it, just now they are sick for the thought and desire of such a thing; and presently they are as sick of the enjoyment of it, and quickly forget it. Hence it is that the Psalmist tells us, *That man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain, Psal. 39. 6.* How can that man consider any thing as he ought, or look beyond the Face and Appearance of any thing, that distracts himself with such variety of thoughts, such multiplicity of Objects that have not ~~any~~ any affinity with each other? *The Eyes of a Fool, saith Solomon, are in the ends of the earth, Prov. 17. 24.* (that is) upon every impertinent, idle object that concerns him not. It would very much dispose our minds to that consideration, I am speaking of, to make the mind attend and keep close to the duties that concern us, and the work that we are about: The more we give it a liberty to fly about every where, and to think of matters that concern it not; the more unfit will it be to be confined to any serious consideration of Heavenly things. And as a roving, wandering mind is very unmeet for consideration, so is a slothful, lazy spirit that will not be at any pains in thinking, though of the greatest matters in the world: That, when you would bring it on to consideration, draws back, and cries *there is a Lion in the way, Prov. 26. 13.* and is discouraged at every difficulty. That will not undergo any labour, first to clear the truth to the understanding and then to bring it to the heart. *The slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, & will not so much*

Good earnest against a fickle, slothful spirit; I put these both together, because I would not multiply particulars too far. It is the natural disease of man's Soul since it hath forsaken God, either to sit still and pine away in sloth and negligence, or else to wander up and down from one variety to another; both these extremes are too incident to the perverted nature of man, & stand in very great opposition to the duty of Consideration: our corrupted minds are very prone, either to sleep securely, or else to dream and wander about; either to be altogether idle, or busie to no purpose. They are both Feaverish Distempers of the Soul, only one is the hot, and the other is the cold Fit; but they are both far enough from that sound and even Constitution, wherein the health of the Soul doth consist. The great difficulty of consideration lies in the averiness of our hearts to any fixed, serious thoughts of any thing, much more of God and the life to come, and matters of that nature: The mind is of a wandering nature, and quickly weary of continued, pertinent, orderly thoughts of any thing: but yet those that have overcome that fickleness of a roving mind as to other things, yet are backward enough to think with pertinency, life and affection upon spiritual and eternal things; It's easie to let the mind wander from one object to another, and very suitable to the fickle, mutable nature of man, that having left God, is become most unlike him. This is the temper of the greatest part of the world; whose minds are become like a queazy or wanton stomach, that must taste of this and that, & the other dish, and cannot keep to any one,

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so their minds and affections are now after this thing, presently after another; and are more alterable than the wind or weather. First, They are sick for this or that beloved Object, and then by and by they are sick of it, just now they are sick for the thought and desire of such a thing; and presently they are as sick of the enjoyment of it, and quickly forget it. Hence it is that the Psalmist tells us, *That man walketh in a vain shadow, and disquieteth himself in vain, Psal. 39. 6.* How can that man consider any thing as he ought, or look beyond the Face and Appearance of any thing, that distracts himself with such variety of thoughts, such multiplicity of Objects that have not ~~any~~ any affinity with each other? *The Eyes of a Fool, saith Solomon, are in the ends of the earth, Prov. 17. 24.* (that is) upon every impertinent, idle object that concerns him not. It would very much dispose our minds to that consideration, I am speaking of, to make the mind attend and keep close to the duties that concern us, and the work that we are about: The more we give it a liberty to fly about every where, and to think of matters that concern it not; the more unfit will it be to be confined to any serious consideration of Heavenly things. And as a roving, wandering mind is very unmeet for consideration, so is a slothful, lazy spirit that will not be at any pains in thinking, though of the greatest matters in the world: That, when you would bring it on to consideration, draws back, and cries *there is a Lion in the way, Prov. 26. 13.* and is discouraged at every difficulty. That will not undergo any labour, first to clear the truth to the understanding and then to bring it to the heart. *The slothful man hideth his hand in his bosom, & will not so much*

as bring it to his mouth again, saith the wiseman, *Prov.* 19. 24. No wonder if such a mind famish for want of knowledg that will not bend it self to consider of the things that concern its everlasting peace; no wonder if the *Vineyard of the slothful be overgrown with thorns*, and if *nettles cover the face thereof*, and the *stone Wall thereof be broken down*, *Prov.* 24. 30. He must needs be Ignorant that will not search, and hunt after knowledge; and he must needs have a crude, raw, and undigested knowledge that will not Roast what he took in hunting, and will not take the pains to work the truth upon his heart which he hath gotten into his mind, *Prov.* 12. 27. If you desire heartily to be rid of those distempers, you must use force and violence with your thoughts, and confine them when they would wander, and spur them up when they would lie Idle. Under God man hath the greatest command over his own mind, and ought to use the authority God hath given him to compel it to the frequent exercise of this duty; as you would deal with your beast that is skittish or jadish, so you must deal with your mind; if your horse be skittish and unruly, you will use the curb and bridle to tame and bring him into order; you must use the same prudence with a skittish, unruly mind, that would not be under command, but wander after its own imagination: On the other side if your Horse be dull and jadish, you will make him feel the spur and whip till he mends his pace; so must you do also by a sleepy, stupid mind, wake it out of its security; and use your Sovereignty over it, till you have made it yield, and it begins to feel the sweetness
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of those thoughts, that before it would not endure, nor give any way to. He that can prevail thus with his own heart shall prevail with God. So much for the *First Direction* to the duty of Consideration, viz. *Shun all impediments.*

Secondly, As you must avoid all that will either hinder or discourage the work of consideration; so you must do all that will promote and further it : As

First, It will much conduce to the successful performance of this duty, to be skilful in it : Now this skilfulness lies in these two things. (1) That your mind be truly convinc'd that God is the *summum bonum*. (1.) The chiefest good, and that your happiness consists in likeness to, and communion with him; and that you have arguments at hand to encrease this conviction, and to advance it to a higher degree by a quiet daily consideration of them. (2.) That you know how to move upon your own affections, that they may be answerable to this conviction; I mean that you be skill'd to excite love to God, desire after him, joy and delight in him, hope towards him, and the rest of the mixt and more compounded affections of thankfulness to him, repentance for sins committed against him; and that by such Rhetorick and Perswasions that most prevail with him: and to this end it is necessary, that your memory, if not your heart, be stored with matter fit to work upon mind and heart, collected out of the Word and Providence of God, and from the daily observation of your own temper and inclinations; and that you can cloath it with expressions that work best upon your own Genius and Disposition. That matter
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and way of pressing it upon your mind and affections is best to you which prevaileth most with them; and which will vary according to mens different complexions, education, society, studies and other circumstances, which make a man lie open to this or that way of arguing more than any other; and more easie it may be to be wrought upon by a more probable argument, than others by a plain demonstration. Such a Scheme of Rhetorick will stir this mans affection, that will not move anothers: and the phrase and manner of expression will set one man on fire, that will not warm another; so that it is no small step to the success of your meditations, to be well versed in your own temper and constitution, and to handle your self accordingly when you come to treat by way of Soliloquy with your own Soul. Moreover, the main stick to some mens proficiency lies more in their understandings, than in their affections: In others the obstruction is most in their affections; for some are more easily conquered by rational arguments that convince and satisfy the understanding; others by such as work more upon the affections.

The more you have of this skill to discern the most suitable method to deal with your self, and what are the fittest applications; the more you are like to profit in, and by consideration. Your reproofs, admonitions, and encouragements are the more likely to do their work when they are suitably applied, and hit you in the right Vein.

Thirdly, Another help to consideration will be to charge it upon your self as a duty of flat necessity: why is it that men that make conscience

ence of prayer, yet make none at all of this duty of consideration, though this be of as absolute necessity as the other? And prayer is like to turn into a meer form, and prove ineffectual without Meditation: For what can you imagine can be the reason, but that they take the one to be their duty, and not the other, when as God hath enjoined the one as peremptorily as the other? And some set time should be set apart daily for the one as well as for the other. It's Meditation that inspires life into Prayer, hearing the Word, and all other duties. And consideration, as well as prayer, must help you to profit by the providences of God towards you. For God will have man to have a subordinate hand in his own proficiency and salvation; and consideration is the leading Act whereby man is instrumental to his own happiness. It could not be, that this duty should be so generally neglected and performed by so few, excepting by the By, unless it were generally thought to be no duty: men that have any Conscience dare not live in the constant neglect of a known duty but they will be worried by their Conscience, which will frequently twitthem with their neglect. And they will perform it in a dead and customary manner rather than not at all; and so be feared to undergo the lashes of their own guilty minds that will frequently scourge them; well, whether you will charge it upon your selves as a duty of absolute & indispensible necessity or no; so it is, duty will be duty, think how you will; and your slight and careless thoughts, will not make the Law of God of none effect. You have no small obligation upon you to this duty, whether you will take notice
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of it, yea or not. If you neglect this duty; and have any Spark of true grace in your souls, any sincere love to God and faith in his Son, you will quickly perceive the want of this duty in the languishing condition of your soul; your grace will quickly wither, and look with a famished, pined complexion, and prayer and all other duty will starve into a meer form, want those holy affections, which are the very life and soul of them; and if you have no grace in sincerity, none you are like to have, till you are brought to impartial, serious consideration. Is it not better therefore to know your duty, and the great necessity of it, and bless God, that you are not kept in the dark, as many others are, that know ^{not} of what moment it is, and perish for want of it? If it were not a duty so necessary to salvation, then perhaps, the ignorance and neglect of it were not to be so much lamented; but when the want of it will so apparently destroy your souls, it's time to look about you, and to lay a further obligation on your selves by your own vow and promise, to be frequent in the practice of it. The duty is bound upon you already by a double necessity. (1.) By the necessity of a precept. (2.) By the necessity of a means. God hath commanded it, and therefore if there were no other obligation, this were sufficient to engage us to the performance. But if there were no command of God to enforce the duty, yet since it is a means without which salvation is so impossible, and hath such a mighty influence upon faith and all other grace, now it becomes doubly necessary to us. Let us then add a third necessity and lay a fast-

er obligation upon our selves, by charging it upon our own souls, and obliging our selves by deliberate vow and resolution to as Conscientious performance of it, as we do of Prayer, or any other duty that we dare not neglect; lest we should not be able to rise or go to Bed without fear and the disturbance of a guilty mind.

Thirdly, It will be a singular advantage to the work of Consideration, (though more remote) to be temperate. Now Temperance is taken in the widest compass, for Moderation in the use of all Earthly Comforts; And in this larger extent it's taken, when *Epictetus* comprehends all Virtue in those two words; *Temperance* and *Patience*, or *Abstinence* and *Sustenance*; *ἐν τῷ Ἀνέχεσθαι καὶ Ἀνίσχειν*: Or else it's taken in its narrower compass, for Moderation in those more gross and bodily pleasures, such as Meat and Drinks; and Wineconess or Effeminacy; it's Temperance in the more restrained sense that I here recommend to you. Though I know, as it's taken in its widest acceptance, it must needs farther it more highly, because it hides the other, and much more, but then it would be co-incident with the second impediment, which was to shun all unordained delights in any thing here on Earth.

The mind that is oppressed with Meat and Drink, and dispirited with *Wine*, and made weak with *Dulness* and *Effeminacy*, is not fit for Contemplation (either Solemn or Occasional) unless it be of Carnal or Corporeal Beauty; it is altogether unfit for the pure and spiritual Contemplation of the Divine Excellencies, and the ravishing Beauty of Holiness; that are not enjoyed but by one that's clear in understanding.

ding, and pure in heart, which they can never be, which sot and pollute themselves with such muddy and impure delights.

The duty of Set and Solemn Contemplation requireth an illuminated, attentive mind, and a chearful heart, if it be performed with any considerable Success: But now, *Whoredom and Wine, and new Wine take away the Heart, Hos. 4. 11.* They defraud this duty of that sprightfulness, vigour and affection that it requires; and the Understanding that's perpetually smoak'd with the Fumes that rise from an over-charged Stomach, hath few *Lucida intervalla*, and is never perspicacious, and fit for such contemplation. I deny not, but some degrees of this intemperance may consist with this duty, and there may be some vacancy for a little dull exercise of this work: But if this disease be grown to any height or prevalency, the mind will be so listless, and the affections will be so earthly, that you may as well move a Block, as such a surfeited soul to these Sublime and Raised Meditations. It will be like *Anselm's Bird* with a heavy weight tyed to the Leg of it, when it begins to fly and lift up it self, or rather, it will have no disposition to fly at all. O that all Gluttons and Drunkards, and Persons addicted to Filthiness and Wantonness were well sensible of this, that are like to perish for ever for want of that Consideration that should save them from destruction. Little do they think how they starve in the midst of such Plenty, and how lean and famished their Souls are, whilst *Their eyes stick out with farness, Psal. 73. 7.* Hence it is that your Gluttons and Wine-bibers, and the rest of our Belly-Gods are so little acquainted with the life to come, and that

that they so little relish any discourse with themselves or others about Heavenly things; and that *the Lord is not the Portion of their Cup, Psal. 16. 5.* Hence it is that those that are so familiar at the *Crokes-Shop* or *Tavern*, are so strange to the place of Gods Residence, and inter-meddle not with the Heavenly Joys.

But although it be this gross Intemperance and Sensuality that is so Point Blank an enemy to Consideration; yet I must say also that every degree of Intemperance doth much hinder the duty, and interrupt the joy and pleasure thereof. For as it is a Sin against God, and much provokes him to withdraw and conceal himself, so it is a very malignant Enemy to the health and vivacity of Mind, that this duty calls for; for it weakens the Brain, and spoils the Memory, which should supply matter to Meditation, and which is worse, it brutifies the heart. When the Store-house of the Body is full, the Store-house of the Mind must needs be empty of every thing, but Fumes and Vapors, with which it is like enough to abound, and such Notions as these minister to: No wonder if God be seldom in such Mens Memories or Hearts. Therefore the Prophet complaineth of the full-fed *Israelites*, that they were estranged from the Lord, *According to their Pasture so were they filled, they were filled, and their heart was exalted, therefore have they forgotten me saith the Lord, Hos. 13. 6.* And why so; but because such Fulness and Intemperance will not let Men consider, and without this God must needs be forgotten, because he lies not open to the bodily eye or sense; it is the pure mind and heart
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that must see him both here and hereafter ; and if these that are *pure in heart are the blessed men*, *Mat. 5.8.* Then they are cursed that are impure in mind and heart through Intemperance and other Lusts, because they neither do now by consideration, nor shall hereafter see God in the Beatifical Vision ; but Temperance disposeth unto both.

Fourthly, If you have any good Evidence that Christ is yours, and you are his, it will very much promote and sweeten the work of Consideration : I know that Consideration is a necessary means to bring a man to Christ, and to turn the course of his affections and conversation ; but yet so soon as a man feels this work done, that the world is resolutely forsaken, and God is heartily chosen, the Soul will be then better disposed to contemplate the glory of God and Heaven, to turn its thoughts upon the promises of the Gospel, when it hath some interest and propriety in them ; yea, and to think with pleasure upon the threatnings of Gods Word, the nearness of death, the Worm of Conscience that shall torment the wicked for ever and ever, after it hath made some good escape, and the bitterness of death is past, and the Sting pull'd out.

It's no absurdity nor contradiction that *Consideration* should bring a man to Christ, and that the knowledge of a mans interest in Christ should prompt him to, and further him in the work of *Consideration* ; that *Consideration* should beget Grace, and that Grace again should beget *Consideration*. This κυκλὸς ἐννοίας is frequent both in Nature and Grace : What more proper

per to bring a man to Repentance, than to consider the folly of his ways, the filthiness and danger of his Sin, and the terrour and unavoidable-ness of Gods wrath? Who more like to be burthened with his transgressions, and feel the load of his iniquities, than he that frequently considers what misery it brings upon him both here and hereafter; and how impossible it is to escape without Repentance? Who more likely to abhor himself, to be humbled and broken in heart, to confess his Sin with Shame, and to resolve against it (which are but the several parts of Repentance) than he that considers how he hath affronted God, perverted his Order, seduced his Brethren, and wronged his own Soul, and disparaged the very Reason that God hath given him, and laid the Foundation of Gods Eternal displeasure, and his own everlasting ruine? You see *Consideration*, when it is of such particulars, is the ready way to bring a Sinner to Repentance. And on the other side, who so like to find joy and pleasure in the Contemplation of Heaven, and the joys thereof, in the possession it self, and the promise that gives Right and Title to it, than he that hath some good hope through Grace that he shall enjoy it: So that you see of what use *Consideration* is both before and after Conversion; but yet as before Regeneration there may be in the heart of a Sinner that love which worketh by desire, though not that which worketh by complacency to Heaven and heavenly things; so before Conversion there may be that *Consideration* that is forced and constrained, but after Conversion

it's like to be more sweet and pleasant, and to bring in greater profit and advantage. O could you but look upon God as your reconciled Father in Christ, and one that is at peace with you, how would this help up your thoughts Heavenward, and sweeten your Meditations of the life and happiness to come? you would not need then so much to force and spur up your mind to such comfortable thoughts; at least sometimes it will be getting up of its own voluntary accord upon Mount *Nebo*, to view the promised Land; he that hopes to be one of the Inhabitants of the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, will at least sometimes walk about *Sion*, and go round her, and tell the Towers thereof: And mark well her Bulwarks, and view and consider her stately Mansions and Palaces, *Psa.* 48. 12, 13. what an encouragement will you have to look up and behold the glory and perfection of the Divine Nature, when you can say, *This is my Father, and these Attributes I have an Interest in?* But yet I must needs confess, that even after Conversion there will be oft-times much backwardness and reluctancy to this spiritual and heavenly Duty; and you will need to quicken up your selves, and chide your backward hearts, that they should be so strange to the place where their Treasure is laid up: But yet it will not be so hard to bring your heart to such Meditations as it was, when you were without hope, and without God in the world.

Fifthly, It will further the work of consideration, to lay Temporal things in the balance with Eternal things, and to make advantage of every

every Object that's presented to our Senses, to make the consideration of the highest and greatest things more warm and piercing: You may very well and rationally conclude, that if the glory of Earth be so great as to dazle the eyes of some beholders, and strongly to enamour their affections, that the glory of Heaven doth far out-shine it. He hath reserved joy and gladness indeed for that place and state, if there be so much to be found in this sinning imperfect state here on Earth; for all Earthly things serve but to the example and shadow of Heavenly things, *Heb. 8. 5.* If the beauty of the body be so taking, that men and women oftentimes dote upon it, what is the beauty of the Soul do you think? and if it were to be seen with bodily eyes, how much would it ravish and amaze the beholders? If the pleasure of the Senses be so sweet and delicious that men will buy them at the dearest rate; how sweet must the pleasures of the Soul needs be; when there is so vast a difference between the Soul and Body that are the subjects of these pleasures.

As there is an unspeakable disproportion between a Spirit and a Body, so there must needs be as wide a disproportion between the delights of the one, and the delights of the other. For I suppose none can be so absurd as to think, that the state to come shall be no better than this present state, and that mens Bodies are as much worth as their Souls; and the Heaven, which is the place of his glorious Habitation and Palace, is no more adorned than the

Earth: None can be so void of reason to think, that God bestows as much upon his Rational Creatures, whilst they are in a state of Tryal and Probation, as when they are come to Perfection, and are actually chosen to be Citizens of the Heavenly Corporation, where they shall live for ever: How can the joy of Seed-time be comparable to the joy of Harvest? And how can this visible Sun rejoyce the Creatures that it shines upon, so much as the Face of God will rejoyce those that behold it? You may well therefore rise up in your Meditations from any perfection that you behold on Earth, to admire those perfections that are unseen: They are the greatest that lye not open to the bodily eye, nor can be enjoyed by any Corporeal Faculty or Organ: so that when you walk abroad, and look upon the glory of the visible Heaven and Earth, you may much more admire the splendour and excellency of the invisible Heavens, and consequently of all those things that lead thither: God that made all things, made those visible things, that they might be some advantage to the Understanding of things invisible; and that they might lead up our apprehensions and affections to him that cannot be immediately seen without the help of such a Glass. God is infinitely exalted above our understanding, neither are we capable of having any direct and proper Conceptions of the state and life to come; and therefore the glory of Heaven is set forth to us in the Word of God, by such things as seem glorious to our Senses: *The Streets of the New Jerusalem, or Heaven,*
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are said to be paved with Gold, and the Gates to consist of Pearl and precious Stones; and the pleasures of that state are set forth by a Feast, because these are so pleasing to our Senses. Now though we must not understand these things in a proper literal sense, yet we are hence instructed, that the happiness is exceeding great, and such as cannot be well understood by us, but by such helps as these: So that we may well argue from any pleasures or excellency here on Earth, to the excellency and pleasure of that state, and make this advantage of all sensible comforts, to make our apprehensions of things spiritual more lively and affecting. As therefore you may collect the unspeakable torment and misery of the Damned, by the pressures and calamities that we feel here on Earth; and Hell is usually set forth by Fire and Darkness, and a Worm continually feeding upon the Conscience, which are things obvious to our Senses: so likewise is the splendour and dignity of the Saints set forth by a Crown, and Scepter, and Kings, things most glorious here on Earth: And this use we should wisely make of these things to put life into our Meditations, which otherwise would little affect us.

Sixthly, Lastly you must diligently read and hear the Word of God, peruse the labours of those that are most skilful in the exposition and application thereof. If you ask me who they are; I answer, use your best endeavours to know, and make the most impartial enquiry. The frequent casting your eye upon, and open-

ing your ear to such matters, is the way to get good furniture into your memory and heart, which will ever and anon creep into your thoughts, and even invite and constrain you to dwell with more intentness and affection on them: But you when you are reading, and hearing these things that must be the Subject of your Meditations, and sowing the Seed of future consideration, you must drive away the *Gen. 15. 11.* Birds of Prey that would devour the Seed that you have sown, I mean all disturbing worldly thoughts, and keep your mind as much retired from all other things as you are able, that it may be free and open to the impressions of the Word and Spirit; those especially that are unfurnished for Meditation must take this course, for it is most like to prosper, since it hath not only Precept, but Reason to enforce it. They must never expect to have their Souls byassed to, and fitted for this Duty, that neglect these means which the Wisdom of God hath appointed, and let their thoughts scamble about, and imploy their eyes and ears about any petty matters, rather than in the reading and hearing of Gods Word, and such explications of it as are likeliest to bring it to the mind and heart; especially read and hear those passages of truth (that Life and Salvation most depends on) most frequently, and get them as fast into your mind as you are able, and a right understanding of the very tenour and chief scope of the Gospel, which is to bring men to the sight of their sins, and by that to come to Christ as his tractable Disciples, and by Faith in Christ to Salvation; which

which design that it might bring to pass, it sets the highest motives and encouragement before us, and gives us the greatest helps : But above all parts of Scripture, the Psalms of *David* frequently read, will promote you in the work of consideration, and teach you how to stir up such affections as you see *David* expresseth almost in every Psalm. There you may see how he sets upon God sometimes, sometimes stirs up his own Soul, confers with God, communes with his own heart, that he might kindle the Fire of Gods Love in his heart, which is the principal design of consideration ; for whether he express sorrow and contrition for his sin, it is but that he may stir up hatred in his Soul against it, which is the great impediment to the Love of God : Or if he express and utter his complaints of the vanity of the World, and the miseries of this life, all is to quicken up his desires after the true happiness of his Soul ; and you know love is intrinsecal and essential to desire ; if he enlarge, as he doth frequently in the praises of the Lord, and display his glory, and muster up his perfections, and call Heaven, and Earth, and Sea, and all the Inhabitants of them, and all the Islands and Continents of the World, and bring in their testimony to him ; and to make his Name glorious, if he summon every living thing that hath breath to praise the Lord, it is that he may advance the esteem and encrease the love of God in his own heart, and the hearts of others ; and therefore from this Book you may fetch matter enough, and argument for consideration to make use of for the

kindling of this and all other holy and devout affections; yea the very out-side, I mean the phrase and expression of the Psalms is such, as hath a powerful Rhetorick with it to set the heart on fire with the love of God; no contemplative and devout Christian but hath had very familiar acquaintance with this Book. I have told you the flat necessity of consideration, if ever a man be brought to his right mind, yea and how necessary it is to preserve you in the love and fear of God after you have believed; if therefore you are convinced that is your duty, without which you can never get the cure of your deadly distempers, then you will make Conscience of the means whereby you may be brought to consideration: The heart is not easily brought to delight in God, and love him above all, and to use the world as if he us'd it not, its consideration that must change it; the heart is naturally dead to spiritual things, it's Consideration that must enliven it, and make it stir; the heart is prone to wander from God, it's Consideration that must bring it home; the heart is full of blindness and obduracy, it's Consideration that must enlighten and soften it: If therefore you would not perish in blindness and obduracy, and wander from God without hopes of recovery, and lose the Pearl of infinite price (which who so is wise will sell all that he hath to buy and purchase) then use the means that must bring you to Consideration.

Having given you some general Directions towards the promoting of the work and duty
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of Consideration, I come in the next place to give you some more *Particular Directions*.

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| 1. As to the matter | } How this Duty is to be performed. |
| 2. As to the manner | |
| 3. As to the end | |

Concerning the matter of your Contemplation.

First, The first great Object of your Consideration should be God, and the Relation you stand in to him, and his glorious Perfections: It's worth thy while to consider daily that he made thee out of nothing; and when there are four distinct Ranks of Creatures (*viz.*) Things that have meer being without life: 2. Things that have being and life, such as are all Vegetables, Trees, and Flowers: 3. Such as have being, life, and sense, such as are Brutes, and other sensitive Creatures: 4. Such as have being, life, sense, and reason; when there are these four Species and Orders of Creatures, he hath placed thee in the highest form, and hath made the other three Ranks for thy use and service; and as he hath made thee such a Creature, so thou hast thy supportation and maintenance wholly from him, and he is training thee up in the world for his immediate presence, and for those ravishing delights that are to be enjoyed in the Beatifical Vision. Canst thou possibly consider the perfection of his Nature, thy relation to him as his Creature, from whom all that thou hast or doest expect must be fetched; thine hourly dependance on him, his Authority over thee, his right and property

ty in thee, his bounty towards thee, and not fall down before him, and lift up thy heart to him with reverence; nor feel the fire kindle in thy heart, and thy self willing to be offered up as a whole Burnt-offering in that fire? To offer up Body and Soul, with all their several faculties and actions, as a living Sacrifice to him, is but thy reasonable service, *Rom. 12. 1.* As it is his end why he made thee, so it should be thy end to have his works continually in thine eye, his Word ever in thine heart, and his praises everlastingly in thy mouth: This was the resolution of *David*, and should be thine; *I will sing unto the Lord, saith he, as long as I live, I will sing praises to my God whilst I have my being: My meditation of him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord, Psal. 104. 33, 34.* Consider that he hath infinite wisdom, and therefore is fit to rule thee, and all the world; he hath infinite power, and therefore its stark madness for such a Worm to resist him; one word of his mouth will undo the Body and Soul for ever, one angry frown of his Countenance will make thee wither, and turn that moving body of thine into a dead and lifeless Clod, yea and send thy Soul into eternal misery. Didst thou but consider the holiness of his Nature, and how much he abhorreth all sin and wickedness, wouldst thou dare to commit it with so much boldness? Didst thou but consider what a piercing eye he hath, to whom the darkness and the light are both alike, *Psal. 139. 12.* wouldst thou think to cover and conceal thy Sins from him, or use craft and subtilty

tilty to blind his eyes? Thou dost not consider
 what he is whilst thou usest such silly shifts as
 these are; they do but provoke a wise man
 that hath but a Beam of Gods infinite wisdom,
 how much more are they like to provoke him?
 There's nothing like ingenuity and plain deal-
 ing, and humble confessing of thy Sin when thou
 hast to do with him; Consideration of the Di-
 vine Purity and Justice would be a very effect-
 ual defence against all unjust and unrighteous pra-
 ctices: If thou dost but consider what antipathy
 there is in Sin to the Divine Nature, and what
 an affront it is to the Majesty of Heaven and
 Earth, it would not go down so easily, nor be
 such a sweet morsel to thee: When men begin
 to take off the eye of their Consideration from
 God, then they begin to walk in darkness, and
 know not at what they stumble. What makes
 men so vain and wicked in their imaginations
 and practices, but because God is not in all
 their thoughts by Consideration? What makes
 the ungodly to prefer the pleasures of Sin,
 which are but for a season, but because they do
 not eye and consider the recompence of re-
 ward? What makes men either to neglect to
 come to God by prayer, or to put up faint and
 cold supplications to him, but that they consi-
 der not that he is, and that he is a rewarder of
 all them that diligently seek him: Thou wouldst
 not murmur and repine at any of Gods Pro-
 vidences towards thee, if thou didst but consi-
 der what Equity, Wisdom and Mercy there is in
 all his dealings towards thee, thou wouldst en-
 dure the Cross, and despise the shame, if thou
 didst

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4. 6.

didst but seriously consider the joys that are set
 before thee; thou wouldst be steadfast and un-
 moveable, always abounding in the work of the
 Lord, if thou didst but consider thy labour can-
 not be in vain in the Lord. I advise thee there-
 fore to consider and think more frequently
 what an impartial righteous Judge thou hast to
 do with in thy actions, and how dear thou
 shalt pay for thy Sin one of these days if thou
 wilt commit it, and this would spur thee for-
 ward to thy duty when thou wouldst neglect it,
 and keep thee backward from Sinful practice
 when thou wouldst commit it. Let my counsel
 therefore be acceptable to thee, have God
 more frequently in thy Meditations, consider
 that he seeth and knoweth thy ways, that he
 abhorreth all wickedness both of heart and life,
 that he is the Governour of the World, to
 whom all these things are as nothing, that com-
 mandeth the Beings of Heaven and Earth, that
 hath the Winds and the Sea, and Men and De-
 vils in the Chain of his Providence, that was
 from all Eternity, and is the same for ever and
 ever; but thou art of yesterday, and knowest
 nothing, *Job* 8. 9. Thou mayst resist the will of
 his Command and Precept, because it is to try
 thee, but thou canst not withstand the will of
 his purpose, what he doth will peremptorily
 shall come to pass; *The Counsel of the Lord*
standeth for ever, the thoughts of his heart to all
Generations, *Psa.* 33. 11. If thou lovest thy own
 Soul, let God be continually before thy eyes;
 it is because thou knowest him not that thou
 art so unlike him; it is because thou art not
 acquainted

{ P. 139 }
 { v. 2. 3. 4. }
 { v. 23. 24. }

acquainted with him, that thy heart is so void of love to him ; it is because thou understandest him not, that thou dost so little fear and reverence him : And why hast thou so little knowledge and understanding of him, but because thou considerest him not? Didst thou but well consider his Omnipotency, thou wouldst fear him more than all the world beside? Didst thou but consider his Veracity, thou wouldst take his word for the greatest security, and give more credit to it, than if thou hadst the word and Oath of the most trusty and sufficient men ; thou wouldst certainly believe the threatnings thereof, and foresee the accomplishment of the promises thereof, as if they were already made good, and steer thy life according to the most wise and excellent precepts thereof. Consider but his faithfulness, and thou wilt see no reason to distrust him: They that know thy Name (saith the Prophet *David*) will trust in thee, for thou Lord hast never forsaken those that trust in thee, *Psal. 9. 10.* Thou wouldst venture thy life and all thy comforts upon his Word ; come what will thou wouldst trust in the Lord, and do good, *Psal. 37. 3.* And whilst thou art intent upon thy duty wouldst not fear, though men and Devils should combine against thee ; and the more experience thou hast, the more thou wouldst be confident, and say, *It's better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in man ; It's better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in Princes, Psal. 118. 8, 9.* Do but consider that he is a Spirit, and thou wilt abhor a meer bodily service, and tremble to let thy

thy lips go when thy heart imagineth deceit, and is not imployed in his worship, and thou wouldest worship him in spirit and in truth, *John* 4. 23, 24. Therefore men worship him they know not how, nor care not in what manner, because they worship they know not what, *Ver.* 22. Men would not dare to offer up to him the Sacrifice of fools, if they did but consider with whom they have to do, *Eccles.* 5. 1. Neither would they come with dead hearts before the living God. This is the first thing that I recommend to your Consideration, as being most worthy of it, *viz.* The Nature and Attributes of God, with application to your Affection and Practice.

Secondly, The next thing that is worthy of your serious thoughts, and daily consideration, is wherefore you were born into the world. Can any man that hath not laid his reasoning Faculty quite asleep, think that he was made to live forty or threescore years in the world, and then to die like a Brute, and there's an end of the Story: He that will take the pains to consider and make use of the light that's offered to him, both in *Nature* and *Scripture*, shall find that Man was made for something else, and that he is worse than a Brute that looks no higher. I take it for granted, that no man can think that such a Noble Creature as Man is, was made by chance by a happy conjuncture of a few fortuitous Atoms that jostled together, and met at last into such an orderly shape, as if all had been contrived with the greatest wisdom imaginable: Nor do I think that any one that

that hath not quite lost his understanding, can imagine that he grew out of the Earth as Grass or Trees, much less will he say that there was no first Man, but that there hath been a Succession of Reasonable Creatures from Eternal Ages: If therefore he could not possibly come into the world any of these ways, then he must be made by a Wisdom far higher than his own, and that can be none but God. These things being supposed, can any man in his wits think that God made the highest and best of his Creatures here on Earth with such Faculties, and endued him with understanding, and put such desires into him, that nothing in this world can satisfy; to live a little while below, and torment himself, and to rule and domineer over the other Creatures, and devour them, and live as he list; and then after he is dead, to be had no more in remembrance? Surely he might have plaid at such a Game as this without Reason; he might have satisfied his lusts, and took his ease, and never have missed this Faculty that doth but chastise him for his brutishness, and help to make him more miserable than those that want it. It is most certain that God hath design'd him for a higher end, even for the service of himself, & an Eternal life with him hereafter. It's most worthy of your serious consideration, that you may be fully satisfied, and know whether you have done this work: If indeed you can think after you have well considered that its no matter how a man lives, so he can but enjoy a little mirth and laughter in the world, then you may cast off all other care if you will, and
study

study how to live merrily, and Crown your selves with Rose-buds before they be withered: If any man can consider, and reason impartially, and think it is the wisest way to enjoy the pleasures of Meat and Drink, and Lust and Ease, he shall have my consent to take his course. Who would envy a man that was made to live above the Stars, and to out-shine the Sun in all its glory, that will chuse rather to go to Grass, and to feed with his Cattel? All the difference is, that he hath a little more Wit than a Cow or a Horse, and therefore can do more mischief than one of them; but his pleasure is but brutish, and of no higher a stamp than theirs. O consider, that though you may stifle your Reason, and smother the Light that teacheth you to live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present evil world, you shall not always prevail against it; if you will not let it speak now, it will speak whether you will or no, and cry out bitterly against you hereafter: Consideration would roundly and quickly tell you, that you were made to know, love and obey God that made you for a while in this world, and then be removed to the sight and enjoyment of himself; other things sublunary were made for the service of Man, but Man for Gods immediate service; his very Constitution, and the make and frame of all his faculties proclaim thus much: What should he do with an Immortal Soul to walk up and down the world with, if he were not to live in another world? Why should he be put to School among the visible Creatures, and be under the discipline

discipline and instructions of his Maker day and night, which other Creatures are not partakers of, if he were not training him up for a higher State? Alas God delighteth not in cruelty, nor in making this life a burden to us, it is that he might prove us, and try us, and wean us from things temporary, and awaken us to seek out for that happiness that indeed we were made for: *Job* therefore takes it for a high favour to be thus severely educated; *What is Man that thou should'st magnifie him*, (saith he) *or the Son of Man that thou should'st set thy heart upon him*; and that thou should'st visit him every morning, and try him every moment? If this were not in order to a future good, why should he not complain rather that God hath made him in a worse condition than the Beasts? they enjoy pleasure without any remorse, and lay them down in their Dens, and are secure; but Man vexeth himself with a thousand cares, and frighteth himself with as many fears, and seeth evil before it comes, and feeleth it after its past and gone, which Brutes cannot do: But as Earthly Parents, if they are wise, will train up their Children with more severity than they will their servants, and others that they bear not such a respect to: so the most wise and gracious God useth a more severe Discipline towards Man, whom he intendeth to a greater honour, than towards the rest of his Creatures; he letteth them take their course whilst he tyes Fetters and Bands upon men, and tyeth them by his Laws to Noble and Worthy actions, and scourgeth them with his Rod when they de-

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viate and wander from the way of life and happiness, as if he would even constrain them to be happy. O why do we no more pursue our own happiness, when God doth even entreat us, and spur us on by so many encouragements, and hath made us for this very work and business! Shall God be more solicitous for our welfare than we are for our own? O poor deluded sinner! thou mistakest thy work and business, and where thy happiness lies, when thou art pleasing thy flesh, and greedily hunting after the pleasures thereof: Thou thinkest that fleshly pleasure, or worldly gain is godliness, but it will prove quite contrary in the end; and thou wilt then know, when it is too late, that godliness is the greatest pleasure and gain: I know it's natural to thee to thirst after happiness; seek it then in the way that God hath prescribed, or thou shalt never purchase thy desire, though thou pine away thy self from day to day with earnest desires and endeavours after it: Thou wert made for God, and thy Soul will be restless till it return to him; Consideration would convince thee that thus it is; think then more frequently what is that work thou wert made for.

Thirdly, The next thing worth your most serious Consideration is, how well you have answered the end of your Creation. You see what a wise, just, holy and impartial God you have to do with, and that you are his Creatures and wherefore he hath made you, and endued you with such Faculties, and given you such various helps and encouragements: Now consider

der how well you have used them, how you have improved your several Talents, and served your Maker, and kept the Statutes and Judgments he hath given you: Have you had your heart in Heaven, or in Earth, ever since you came hither? Have you lived to God, or without God in the world? Have you lived in the love and praises of your Maker, and in perfect obedience to his Laws? or have you not rather extinguished all love of God in your hearts, and violated all his righteous Laws, and preferred the wisdom of the Flesh before the wisdom of the Spirit, and set your selves to oppose his Government? Though it may be you have not sinned against him on set purpose, and directly opposed him, yet have you not neglected to consult his will, and when you have known your duty in many particulars, have you not refused to obey? Let your own Consciences be the Judge: Have you kept the fear of God always before your eyes? Hath no corrupt communication proceeded out of your mouth? Have no idle, blasphemous, wicked thoughts crept into your hearts? Have you been just and righteous in all your dealings towards God and Men? Have you stood up for the honour of God against all his Enemies, and faithfully reprov'd Sin, and done all your works with respect to Gods glory? or have you not overlooked that, and minded your own worldly interest, and cherished revengeful, proud, ambitious thoughts in your own hearts, and countenanced Sin in others? at least, have you not been silent when Gods Name hath been lightly

used in every trivial matter, and his Sabbaths profan'd, and his Word derided? There's none of us but must confess we have neglected this great work too much at the best; how much more at the worst? Our Hereditary Corruption was enough to make us odious in the pure Eyes of God for ever; what then shall we plead for our Actual Sins, which are multiplied to such a number, that we cannot reckon them up? So that there is no man that is not liable to the Wrath of God, and the Condemning Sentence of his Law. Consider whether you have not been treasuring up Wrath all your days, and destroying your selves, and preferring Dung and Dross before him. Did he make thee to affront and dishonour him, and prefer a trifle before him? Did he make thee to scrape after the world, to make provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof? Bethink thy self, and consider whether thou hast discharged thy Duty, and answered the Ends of thy Creation, and done all to the glory of God, and you will see Cause enough to abhor your self.

Fourthly, Being thus obnoxious to Gods displeasure, and liable to Death and Condemnation, consider in the fourth place, whether you are sensible of your Sin and Misery, and whether you have accepted the grace which the Gospel offers to you? There's no remedy but you must perish for ever, and have the Judgment of Everlasting Condemnation, if *Consideration* do not bring you to Repentance, and wound your hearts with the bitter sense and feeling of your Sin.

O consider that it was the mere mercy of God that any such terms were offered to you! he might have left you as he did the fallen Angels, and therefore if now you shall slight a pardon, and refuse to lay your sin to heart, and to be humbled and broken for it, and to come to Christ with a loving and thankful heart, that he would cleanse and purifie you by his Word and Spirit; your case & condition will be the more doleful, & your Judgment at the Great Day will be more Intolerable: I know you have verbally Renounced the World, the Devil and the Flesh, in your Baptismal promise, but have you Really and Unfeignedly Renounced them in heart and life? Are you Convinced that nothing can wash away the stain of any the least of your Sins, but the Blood of Christ, much less wipe away the Sins of your whole Life? Have you thoroughly considered the necessity of his Blood to procure your Pardon? the necessity of his Spirit to Sanctifie you? And that there is no Name under Heaven by which you can be saved but his? but if you be such that loath yourselves for all former Sins, and are weary of a corrupt and sinful Nature, and Christ be the chiefest among ten Thousand to your Soul; then though you have so much crossed the end of your Creation, and committed so much Sin, it shall not be charged on you, the Blood of Christ will certainly cleanse you from all your Sin; If this faith be not yet wrought in you, consideration must open and soften your Heart, and make way for it. If you did but frequently consider, what privileges they are forthwith admitted to, that do believe; and what a fearful looking for of Judgment

ment, there remaineth for unbelievers, you would hasten to make your escape, from the Stormy Wind and Tempest. Suppose that some Mortal distemper had seized on you, (and this will certainly be your case ere long) do but a little consider what the priviledges of a believer will be worth to you then; how sweet the promise of forgiveness by Christ will be to your tast? *Yea sweeter than the Honey to your throat. Psal. 119. 103.* Do but let your thoughts run upon this Subject, and tell you, How happy you would count your self if you were united to Christ and a true member of his body, reconciled to God, and pardoned, adopted into his family, and received into his especial protection: what would you give then to be acquitted from all your former sins, to have the sting of Death pull'd out; to land safe at your desired Harbour, to dye in the Lord, and to have a Convoy of blessed Angels to carry your soul to endless Joy? say what you would give then to be secured from the sensible fears of Hell, and Death, and to lie down in the Grave in Peace and Safety; and to have nothing then to make you afraid? Why if you are a Penitent Believer, and belong to Christ, there will be comfort for you in the Hour, when all the World shall signifie nothing to you. *Who so hearkeneth unto me shall dwell safely, and shall be quit from fear of evil. Prov. 1. 33.* When natural strength will be sure to fail you, and your Soul is going out from your Body, where it hath so long dwelt, and worldly friends cannot help you, it will be worth a world to be numbred among the Saints, and to have your portion with the Most-High; consideration will help

help you to know all this, and whether you are weary of your sin, and have fled to Christ as your only Sanctuary, and are heartily desirous that he should save you from the Power of it; yea it would help you to all this, and make you sensible, if yet you are not, and break your heart for all former unkindness to God, and Cruelty to your own Soul, and make Christ precious to you indeed, *The full Soul (saith Solomon) loatheth the Honey-Comb, but to the Hungry Soul every bitter thing is Sweet*: The Nature of man prompteth him in every streight to cast about with himself how he may get out: Did you feel to what unspeakable danger, sin hath brought you; I dare say you would not slight the remedy, nor despise the Salvation that Christ offereth to you; did you feel your soul in a sinking condition by reason of your sin, you would lay hold on Christ as naturally as a drowning man catch at a stick, or any thing that he thinks may save him: Thus it would be if sin were a burthen to you. And how could you chuse but feel it a burthen to you, if you did but apprehend the evil and danger of it? Now consideration would clear this to your apprehensions. How could you consider in the midst of such helps, and not discern that by your Sin, you rebel against the highest Authority, transgress the most righteous Law, debauch and corrupt the best of his Creatures here on earth, and make him utterly unserviceable to the uses for which God made him: And trample Reason under your feet, and pervert Gods Established order, trouble the world, and cruelly wound, vex and disquiet your own soul; And even dare and provoke

Prov. 27. 7. }

God to bring upon you all the calamities and miseries, both of this and the other life. And would not these particulars alone discover to you the evil and odiousness of your Sin, and even compel you to hate it? And then when you are gotten thus far, and discern Sin to be your greatest enemy, you would not stick at any terms to be rid of it. If you were once fully satisfied, that Sin is the foulest disgrace and shame of a reasonable Creature, and a certain preparative to it's Eternal reproach, you would not live in peace with it; not lye down and rise up quietly with such a noisom disease upon you, that doth make God loath his own Creature, and will make you abhor and loath your selves, if ever you come to right and sober use of your Reason; *Ezek. 6. 9, and Ezek. 20. 43. and Ezek. 36. 31.* Make as light of it now as you please, whilst reason is laid to sleep, and Scripture is not regarded, and Conscience is quite out faced; it shall not be always so: It is but the night time of this life at farthest, that your dream will last; and then Reason and Scripture and Conscience will all set against you: *Though you wink now and will not see, yet then you shall see and be ashamed,* saith the Prophet, *Isa. 26. 11.* you may certainly fore-see without the Spirit of Prophecy, that thus it will be, if you believe the word of God, And as a truly penitent believer may say with David, *I shall be satisfied when I awake after thy likeness. Psal. 17. 15.* So the deluded Sinner that dreams so merrily now, that Sin is but a matter of nothing whilst he is committing of it, shall be confounded, when he awakes after the Devils likeness, O if these things were soundly believed,
you

you would delay no longer, but forsake your Sin, and come to Christ as your only Saviour; and if any thing under God would bring you to such a certain and undoubted belief, *Consideration* would do the work: *Consider* therefore whether it be thus with you, that Sin is your only burthen, and Christ is your only ease; and if it be not so, *consider* that it may be so.

Fifthly, Another thing which you should see before your eye, and frequently *consider*, is the vanity of all these things, which stand in competition with God for your affections; Do you not see what hasty and unsatisfying Pleasures they are? I call them Pleasures, because Custom hath prevail'd; the World calls them so, and the Flesh calls them so, whose Pleasures they are; for the Soul of Man, were it out of the Body, would not relish them. But though this be the stile of the World, it's pity that a man should call any thing Pleasure, that doth not last for ever: But call it what you will, I am sure it's a grand mistake, to count that a Pleasure that doth not gratifie the better part of a man, and a Sin to bestow the least measure of our love upon any thing that doth not promote the happiness of our Souls. God hath put an aptitude into all things to further mans felicity, and hath commanded him to take them by the right Handle, & make that use of them; & when they are used ultimately for the pleasure that's in them, and are not subordinate to a higher end, even the better serving of God, and saving of our Souls, they are made our End, which should be but Means, and set up instead of

of God, to supply his room, and to be to us what he alone should be; and then no wonder if they prove to us meer vanity, that is, if they lye to us, and frustrate our expectations. All Creatures tell us a meer lye, when they make us any promise of happinels and full contentment in the enjoyment of them; but the truth is, there's no Creature can be so impudent as to make us such a promise; it is we that are too credulous and sinfully prone to take every Shadow for our happinels, and to place our affections upon any thing here on Earth, rather than God. But where is the man that can boast that he hath found the desire of his heart in any pleasure here on Earth? The very fear of doing it, is disparagement enough to any worldly felicity. And since it may be truly said of any thing that here we do possess, except it be the peace of a good Conscience, and the special grace of God in Christ, it may be gone to morrow, and leave us; it is enough to set the heart of a considering man against all created comforts, and make him seek after something that will never fail: Where is the man, or what is his name, that hath found the Treasure of his Soul here on Earth? If they could help thee in all thy streights, and stick to thee for ever, and never forsake thee, then something might be plausibly pretended why thou should'st set thine affections on them. But if thou wilt suffer thy self to consider, thou wilt perceive *Vanity* to be written upon the back of every Creature (that is) as it is going from thee, though thou may'st possibly think that thou seest *Pleasure* written

written upon the face of it, that is, as it is coming towards thee: If thou wilt not believe this now, thine experience shall shortly make it good, and condemn thee for a stark fool, in that thou hast so much teaching, and yet would'st not learn; that thou had'st eyes, and could'st not see; and that thou wast so oft forewarned of the vanity and deceitfulness of these Earthly pleasures, and yet would'st be deceived: And yet I will confess, if the fault could then be mended, after Experience hath taught thee the vanity of them, and thou art going out of the world as a miserable wretch, ready to be forsaken of the comforts which thou hast inordinately loved; if then thou could'st recover thine affections, and bequeath thine heart to God, which the world did possess all thy life time, then it would be some diminution of thy Sin and Folly. But as sure as thou livest God will not take that heart at thy Death, which thou would'st not give him in thy Life, nor be put off with a Legacy when thou art dying and going out of the world, to whom thou would'st give nothing all thy lifetime. But yet if the Lord would accept such an Offering from thee, that heart that hath been so commanded all thy life long by such pleasures as the world affords, will not be now at thine own command and dispose: It will be hankering after the world when it is departing and leaving of it, and would still live among these pleasures if it could, and prefer them before Eternal Life with God. But I beseech thee to consider, whether it be not perfect madness, to
suffer

suffer thine affections to be thus captivated, and bewitched with fading momentary delights. They are little to be envied, whose whole lives are but a Diversion from one pleasure to another: But if any men on Earth are like to perish for ever, and lose those satisfying pleasures at Gods right Hand for evermore, these are the men. It is not one of a thousand that recovers of their Surfeit, when they come to be old, that have lived their younger years wholly addicted to their carnal brutish delights; and not a man that dies amidst such pleasures, before his heart be weaned from them, but is like to feel more bitter torment, than such as have lived all their life-time in poverty and little ease. Surely they that let out their hearts too freely to the things of this world, forget that there is such a Text in the Word of God; *Love not the world, nor the things of the world; if any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him,* 1 Joh. 2. 19. But that which makes some men that know this well enough to be mistaken is, because they read of several rich men in Scripture that have their hands full of these Earthly comforts, and see and hear of others that go to Heaven in the midst of great Possessions; therefore they confidently conclude that they may enjoy them as well as others, and yet be in a safe condition; as if there were no difference between having and enjoying of them. Their hearts were far enough from their Possessions, as you might easily have seen, if you had lived and conversed with them: Though they had a large portion of their comforts, a good measure of this Dung
and

and Dross, as the Apostle calls it, yet they spread it to the good increase of Religion and Piety where they had to do; they took little pleasure in this Dunghil, neither did they spend their precious thoughts, and time to encrease it. But thy heart it may be is Wedded to these Carnal contentments and buried in this Dunghil: and thy sweetest pleasures come in this way, and *when riches encrease thy heart is set upon them, Psal. 62. 10.* Let me tell thee, that if ever Consideration open thine eyes, thou wilt be as mad against these pleasures, as ever thou wert mad for them: And thou that do'st so industriously seek them with such careful study and endeavour, wilt then be sick of them, *nulla major voluptas quam voluptatis fastidium.* No pleasure like that of contemning such transitory unmanly pleasures as these are; if (as Tully saith) *he is not worthy the name of a man, that would live a whole day in such pleasures;* I am sure he is not worthy the name of a Christian that can live his whole lifetime, and prefer the pleasures of his body before the fasting of his Soul. It's the want of serious Consideration, in this particular, that makes so many lose the Joys of Heaven, whilst they feast themselves with the Pleasures of the World.

Sixthly, Another thing that should be the matter of your frequent serious Consideration, is your latter end and the nearness of your dissolution. This would make you wise indeed, not to lay up riches and diet, much less to treasure up *sin and wrath against the day of wrath,*
but

but to lay up in store a good foundation against the appointed time, 1 Tim. 6. 19. Rom. 2. 5. It was the want of such heedful and attentive consideration, that made Moses complain of the Israelites, that they were a nation void of Counsel, neither was there any understanding in them; this made him wish so passionately, O that they were wise, that they understood this, that they would consider their latter end, Deut. 32. 28, 29. This made the same Moses to pray so to teach us to number our days that we may apply our hearts to true wisdom, Psal. 90. 12. Who can think what a vapour his life is, James 4. 14. and make it shorter by neglecting the work it was given him for? A man never begins to live, till he lives to God, and he that survives the most years, after he hath begun this work, may be truly said to live the longest, although he reach not the age of many a Carnal minded man: For a mans life is not to be computed by grey hairs, or the number of years, but by the work that he hath done: If therefore thy work be undone, when death is approaching to thee, what shall I say that thou hast lived but a little while; nay, rather that thou hast not lived at all. I must conclude therefore, that to consider the shortness of thy life is the way to lengthen it, and to put thee into such a happy condition, that death shall be sure never to surprize thee. O what a madness it is for men that are to live but a few years (it may be days in the world) never seriously to consider it, till their days are at an end; when they have but a few turns more to fetch in this World, not to consider it, and
turn

turn unfeignedly to God, before they are turned out of the World; where is that mans Wits that buries his thoughts alive, in the impertinencies of this life and scarce thinks from one end of the year to the other that he must die: and in that very day his thoughts must perish? What doth that man do that Fiddles away his precious time, and never thinks to any purpose, that his day is coming, and what a sad tune he will be then in? If mens thoughts were but frequently, and seriously imployed about this subject, men would not live, and walk about the World for nothing as they do: They would not fish all their life time, and catch nothing, but a little worldly pleasure and honour; which was but a bait that Satan used to bring them to this misery, that now they are departing into. Wo! wo be to the man that thinks not of Death, till it is even at his door; That sees it not till his eyes are ready to close up: That never dreams of it till he is ready to awake in another World! O Sirs, your Souls are here to day, and gone to morrow, and *you know not what one day or night may bring forth, Prov. 27. 1.* Though you may think it is the way to a merry, comfortable life, to put the serious sober thoughts of your later end out of your mind; yet I am sure it is not the way to a comfortable joyful death; and is it not a thousand times more desireable to die comfortably than to live comfortably, if you will needs part these two one from the other? But I must plainly tell you that you are mistaken, and that it is not the way to a comfortable

comfortable chearful life, to forget a mans latter
 end; and to decline such a provident Fore-
 sight, and Meditation: unless you take a li-
 centious sensual and foolish life, for a comfor-
 table life: And then there's no doubt, but the
 frequent Consideration of a mans latter end,
 will disturb and interrupt such sinful, foolish
 mirth. But there are no men in the World;
 that live a more comfortable, joyful life, and
 taste so full and true content and pleasure,
 as those that have frequently thought upon
 death, and the consequent of it, and made it
 familiar to their thoughts, and have quite o-
 vercome the fear of death by a wise foresight
 of it, and preparation for it. He may well
 rejoyce even at the heart that hath overcome
 his great enemy, and is got over the Rub,
 that the rest of the World must meet with soo-
 ner or later, that shall put an end to their
 foolish mirth and laughter. The considerate
 man hath trampled this King of Terrours un-
 der his feet, and through fear of death is no
 longer subject unto bondage, as inconsiderate
 men are: whereas on the contrary, men that
 are not accustomed to these thoughts, nor have
 brought forth the fruit of them, whensoever
 such thoughts accidentally rush into their mind,
 they cannot bear them; how terrible and af-
 frighting are the apparitions of death, when
 they get into their imaginations and fancy?
 and let them do what they can to shift
 these imaginations out of their hearts, some-
 time or other they will surprize them, and
 break in though they shut the door never so
 fast,

fast, and bolt them out; and then they pay something for their former inconsideracy: If a Fit of Sickness come upon them that threatens them with death, *fearfulness and trembling taketh hold on them, and a fit of horrow is ready to overwhelm them, Psal. 55. 5.* What now? Will you call that a merry comfortable life that's so easily disturbed with one sad dismal thought that may arise? Will you say that a man lives a pleasant life, whom a Hand-writing upon the Wall can damp, and strike into a Fit of Trembling? Will you say that that man lives as happily and comfortably, that by some sad accident (a thousand of which he is subject to) may have his Countenance changed, his Thoughts trouble him, and the Joynts of his Loyns loosed, and his Knees smite one against another, as *Belshazzar* had in the midst of his mirth and jollity? *Dan. 5. 6.* Will you call this a comfortable life that will so soon perish, and come to a fearful end, or that rather that grows more lightsome and chearful when Death it self approacheth, and is drawing near? Let a man that's forsaken of Reason and Understanding forget his latter end, as the fittest Expedient to his distracted foolish mirth; but if thou art Master of any Wit or Reason, thou wilt entertain and cherish such thoughts as these, as the beginning of true Wisdom: O remember that die thou must, and leave the world behind thee; and woe be to thee if thou hast not made some good preparation for a more lasting life? The night of thy life is even almost spent, see how much the Taper of thy present life is already

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wasted.

wasted. If thou knowest any thing, thou canst not but know that it's appointed for all men to die, yea, and that but once, and after Death comes the Judgment; there's no calling back thy time and life when once they are spent, no turning up thy glass again when once it is run out, no after-game to play after the first is lost, no dying a second time when once thy breath is gone; I mean in this world, though there be a second Death a thousand times more terrible than the first in the world to come. Well, if thou wouldst live comfortably indeed, yea and die comfortably also, consider thy latter end, be not afraid of such thoughts that will make thee wise to Salvation.

Seventhly, Another Object worthy thy frequent consideration; is the Judgment of the Great Day: O what pity is it, that a man that's made for another world, and that must be solemnly cited before the Tribunal of the Righteous and Impartial Judge, and be responsible for his whole Life, how he hath spent it, should drive such thoughts out of his mind, as *Gallio* drove *Pauls* Accusers from the Judgment Seat, *Acts* 18. 16. and care for none of these things! What is it better to stand trembling before thy Judge in that day, than to hold up thy Head with confidence? If thou art one that dost not consider the Solemnity of that day, nor the Concernments of thine own Soul in that general Assembly and appearance, thou art more like to be confounded in that day, than to rejoyce. Would a proud vain-glorious Worldling so passionately rejoyce in the day of
his

his prosperity, and let his heart cheer him in the midst of his foolish pleasures, and walk in the ways of his heart, and in the sight of his eyes, if he did but consider, that for all these things God will bring him to Judgment? Would any man cast off all duty to God, or perform it with a negligent slightness and indifference, to gratifie his lazy flesh, or a busie Lust, if he did but remember and consider, that for these things he must be judged, and for these (without Repentance before Death) he must die for ever? O my Brethren! it is no such contemptible trivial day, nor the business that must then be transacted of such small and petty concernment, that you should not think them worth your frequent and considerate thoughts: Think you must whether you will or no upon trifles, if you refuse to think on such matters as these, and to take this day into your sober consideration: Though you should think on the greatest worldly matters, and your thoughts be employed in the management of the Affairs of a Kingdom, yet if you think not upon the Affairs of this great and wonderful day, you do but trifle and dream away your precious life. They that have but a Cause to be tryed before a Judge of *Nisi Prius* that very much concerns their Estates, cannot but remember it, and consider how they may come off with success; but those that are to be tryed for their Lives cannot sleep, nor talk it out of their mind; by Night the terrible Apparitions of it in their fancies interrupts their repose and sleep; and the horrible thoughts of it in the day time

strikes them mute, and damps all their discourse; And shall not a day far more remarkable, where you must undergo a Tryal for your Eternal Estate and Life, be considered? And it is the more worth your consideration, because the Judge before whom this Tryal must be made, is He that made thy self, and all the World, clothed with his Robes of Majesty and Justice: He that delivered into thy hands thy Reason, Memory, Judgment, Freewill, Senses, Honours, Estates, as Talents to be now accounted for; Did not all the Priviledges of thy Birth and Education? Did not all the Mercies of thy Infancy, Youth, and Riper Age, come from above? Deny it now if thou canst: And were not all thy choicest dearest comforts, as Pearls begotten by the Dew of Heaven? His Circuit is not confined to one Nation, or piece of a Nation; but the Circuit that he will ride in that great day shall be the Heaven of Heavens, with a glorious Train and Retinue of Saints and Angels; and the people that shall be gathered before him, ~~are~~ the whole Creation of Angels and Men; the matters that must then be brought to Examination and Tryal, are the secret and more publick actions of our whole lives; the Witnesses that shall be produced, shall be such as are beyond all Exception, viz. mens own Consciences; the Devil and his Angels that are continually watching our mis-carriages, and the Judge himself that can tell the time, the place, the persons with whom, or the things about which the wickedness hath been committed; and the Question that shall be then

then decided in the face of all the world, shall be, whether the persons thus tryed, shall live or die for ever : These are no fidling trifling matters to be slighted, nor unworthy your serious forethought and consideration ; besides the Judge is inflexible, and cannot be bended by force, bribery, or entreaty. If you look into *Psal.* 50. 4, 5, 6. you shall see with what circumstances of Majesty and Terroure this Judg's Process is described and set forth ; a fire shall devour before him, and it shall be very tempestuous round about him ; he shall call to the Heavens from above, and to the Earth that he may judge his people ; and the Heavens shall declare his Righteousness, for God is Judge himself. Were this day well believed and considered, men would not live in any fashion, nor think and speak any thing that comes next, nor do actions that they dare not call themselves to account for : They would fear their own Consciences more than a thousand Witnesses, which in despite of them will be privy to all their actions. I warn thee to take heed of this Witness, for it will betray thee : If thou art wise, when thou hast any wickedness to commit, see that neither God, nor the Devil, nor thine own Conscience have any eye upon thee ; and then thou canst find no place nor time in which thou canst be secure. As it is the great policy of Satan to hide this day from thine eyes, and to keep it out of thy thoughts if he can, that he may take thee Captive at his will ; so it should be thy chief care to have it continually before thine eyes, that thou mayst escape his temptations.

tions. The lively frequent thoughts of this day made *Paul* so unwearied in the work of the Lord, and so importunate with his hearers; *Knowing the terrours of the Lord* (saith he) *we perswade men*, 2 Cor. 5. 11. And it was the great Argument he used with *Tim.* to spur him up to the like diligence, 2 Tim. 4. 1, 2. *I charge thee before God, and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the Quick and the Dead at his appearing and Kingdom, Preach the Word, be instant in season, and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort, with all long-suffering and Doctrine.* And when he did but cast a flash of this day into the eyes of *Felix*, you know what effect it had on him, Acts 24, 25. Though *Paul* was but a Prisoner at the Bar, and *Felix* his Judge upon the Bench, yet when *Paul* reasoned with him of Righteousness, Temperance, and Judgment to come, the Text saith *Felix* trembled. It's madness to put this day out of thy mind which God hath put into his Word, as the most powerful Curb to all Sin, and the most irresistible motive to a sober, righteous, and a godly life. Be not afraid to entertain this day into thy Meditations; the consideration and forethought of this day doth not make it, but make thee ready for it; whether thou thinkest of it or not, it cometh on apace, and thine eyes shall shortly behold the Solemnity of it, either to thy terrour, or to thy unspeakable joy. *S. Hierom* thought he heard the very Trumpet sound continually that must call all the world together, whatsoever he was doing, the Voice was never out of his ears. All the Musick of Worldly Delights and Pleasures

fares would be but as sounding Brass, and a tinkling Cymbal, to one that hath this Trumpet frequently in his hearing; think but believably of the terrible Pomp and glorious Solemnity of that day, and then think of vanity and folly with delight if thou canst? These thoughts would drown the petty thoughts of worldly matters, as the Report of a Cannon doth a Whisper, or as the Sun obscureth the smallest Glow-worm: And if any thing would stop thee in a course of sinning, these thoughts would do it. Thou would'st think it a poor shift to fly to the dark to cover thee, when thou committest any iniquity, if thou didst but consider, that what is done in secret, shall then be proclaimed upon the house-top; and God will find Evidence enough to convince thee, that thus and thus thou didst when he kept silence; yea, thou shalt betray thy self by thy own confession. This is another Object of thy thoughts, and very worthy thine often Consideration.

Eighthly, Another thing that you should frequently steep your thoughts in, is the joys of Heaven, and unexpressible happiness of the Saints in Light; there the Fountain of all Bliss and pleasure shall stand open, and the Face of glorious Majesty shall be revealed. Here we behold him but in a glass, and see but a glimpse of his back-parts; but then we shall see him face to face, by a satisfying ravishing sight and intuition. Were the Soul it self loosned from this bodily Prison, it would be a Spectacle worth your beholding, and a most delectable glorious sight; and your curiosity to behold such a sight

as this, would be far more excusable than theirs whom our Saviour taxed in that question; *What went you out for to see, a Reed shaken with the wind? But what went you out for to see, a man cloathed in Purple, and soft rayment? such are in Kings houses, Mat. 11. 8.* And if then the Soul of man be such a beautiful taking sight, what a blessed sight will that be, when God shall display the fulness of his glory? If a Spirit be so bright and glorious, what is the Father of Spirits, to whom all created beauty is but a drop? What a goodly sight will that be to behold the company of Prophets, Martyrs and Apostles, cloathed in shining rayment, with Crowns on their Heads, and Palms in their hands? And what a ravishing pleasure must it needs be to see Sun and Stars under our feet, and to behold the order and beauty of the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to joyn in that Heavenly Consort? to be admitted into his presence that hath made the Soul and Body out of nothing, *that hath fulness of joy at his right hand, and pleasures for evermore, Psal. 16. 11.* Happy are the persons indeed, that after a few miserable days here on Earth, shall be translated thither into that Heavenly Palace; with long life will he satisfie them, and shew them his Salvation, *Psal. 91. 16.* Talk no more so exceeding proudly, O ye Sons of men, of your worldly Dignity and Honour; what a Dream and meer Imagination is all Earthly felicity, to this of the Saints in Heaven? Your riches, if they were worthy to be named, when we are discoursing of the riches of the Inheritance of the Saints, *Eph. 1. 12. 18.* yet they

they may be corrupted, and your garments may be Moth-eaten, *James* 5. 1. *But the glory of the Saints endureth for ever, for the Lord himself hath prepared a City for them, Heb.* 11. 16. Though they were contemn'd here on Earth, yet they shall have glory enough in Heaven: Then shall that great Sovereign of the World command the best Robe to be brought forth, and put it on them, and call for the fatted Calf to entertain them; and they shall sit down with *Abraham, Isaac and Jacob* in his Eternal Kingdom; and they shall have an Everlasting Feast of joy and gladness, *Luke* 15. 22, 23. Here they have but a Taste, and do but sip now and then, but there they shall have such a draught that shall satisfy their Souls with Eternal pleasure, a Cup that shall be ever going down. O the joys of that state, that no tongue can utter, no mortal man did ever comprehend! But yet mistake me not, I do not intend by these borrowed expressions to intimate a *Turkish* Paradise to you of carnal delights and pleasures, neither would I pervert your judgment by that which is meant for the Excitation and advancement of your affections: It's very material that your apprehensions of that glory be as right as we can attain to in such a place of darkness and distance from it where we live; if you should mistake a Fleishly for a Spiritual felicity to be enjoyed hereafter, it's very possible that even a *voluptuous Epicure* may think himself in the Suburbs of that Kingdom already, and that his Heaven is already begun here on Earth. These forms of Speech therefore taken from eating,
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and drinking, and feasting, whereby the Scripture represents to you the transcending pleasures of the other life, are but Spectacles for weak eyes, and a help for humane infirmity. We are incapable in this life of true and proper Conceptions of the happiness of that state, only in general, that it will be spiritual, and not like these fleshly pleasures that here we tast of: whilst we are in this Prison of the Body, we are not able to understand the liberty that there we shall enjoy; whilst we are here below in this Dungeon of the body, we are not capable of beholding the light and brightness of that glory: But you may safely use these Spectacles to help the dulness of your sight when Heaven is proposed to you, and take the benefit of these gross expressions, if they will but help to attract your desires, and to raise your hopes and expectations more Heavenwards; whilst you do but remember, that the pleasures of that state are incomparably greater than all the pleasures here on Earth, and quite of another kind, that here we want a faculty to express, because we want a faculty to tast. You know a Horse or a Cow would take little pleasure in that food that is most delicious to us; yea, and many a man hath pleasure unintelligible to another man, because he wants his tast and experience: And it's very hard to describe pleasure that depends upon a tast and experience that we our selves have not. The sweetness of Honey would never be understood by all the definitions in the world, if we had never tasted it: Marvel not therefore if I tell you, that the joys of that state are
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not to be properly understood here on Earth, because we have now neither the **tast**, nor the **Meat** that then we shall feed on, I mean, neither the faculty, nor the object. And certain it is, that all pleasure is founded in the suitableness of the Faculty to the Object: Since therefore neither Faculty nor Object shall be then the same that here we have, the glorious pleasures of the perfected Saints must needs be beyond our Comprehensions. But if you shall reply and say, that Grace and Glory differ only gradually, and not specifically, and that they are the same in kind, though not in the height of degree; and therefore that the Regenerate, and such as are truly enlightned, and partakers of the Holy Ghost, may taste the Heavenly gift, and the Powers of the world to come, *Heb. 6. 4, 5.* I answer, they may better understand than others can that want their imperfect grace; but yet there is so vast a difference between Faith and Sight, perfect and imperfect Knowledge, the Mustard-seed, and the Tree that grows up from it; that you may well say it is at the best far beyond their compleat and adequate comprehension: And will not such a happiness as this be worthy thy frequent consideration? Thou dost not soundly believe it (saith *Drexelius*) if thou dost but seldome and slightly think on it: It cannot be that such as penetrate and search into this blessedness, with lively, active and piercing thoughts, should venture the loss of it upon any terms. Thou would'st have little list to part with thy hopes of future happiness for the gain of all Earthly delights, if Consideration had

had once taught thee what Heaven is; or if the Devil or the world should surprize thee before thou hast well considered what it is, and befooled thee, to let go the hopes of Eternal Life, for what the World will give thee instead of it; thou shalt consider when it is too late, and say with that unhappy King that sold away his Kingdom for a draught of water; *Alas! must I for so short a pleasure lose so great a Kingdom?*

Ninthly, Another thing that it concerns thee much to ~~soul~~ about and consider with thy deepest thoughts, is the horror and confusion of those that must be banished for ever from the face of God, and sentenced to everlasting misery: There's none that escape that place but those that frequently think on it; and believe it, its well worth thy serious Consideration to preserve thy soul from such a fearful destruction. Many a man whom God hath awakened to believe those terrible endless torments, have retired themselves from all worldly noise and disturbance, that they might live under the power of these thoughts, as the best preservative against these torments. And is not thy Soul as dear and precious to thee as their's to them, and deserve as much compassion from thee? Surely though it is not thy duty to think actually of the woful and miserable estate of unbelievers, all the day long; Yet it's of absolute necessity, that some serious thoughts should be spent on that subject till the fear thereof make void and prevail over all Carnal worldly fears whatsoever: And make thee more industrious to prevent that
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misery, than thou art to escape the scorn and reproach, and all the sufferings and miseries of this life: otherwise thou art never like to escape it. And methinks, thou should'st easily believe, that Hell is more to be feared than all the Calamities of this Life, and the loss of this Life it self: But thus it will never be, if thou art not one that dost often represent it to thy thoughts. A danger though it be never so great, yet if it be both out of sight and mind also, will fright no body nor have any the least influence upon our endeavours to escape it. The evil must be before the eye of our sense or understanding, that works upon us to take the best course for our security and defence: And the nearer we apprehend it to be, the more hast we make to get away from it: And whether a wicked man hath no reason to think his woful misery near, even at the door, I leave any man to Judge that hath any competent use of his understanding: what can you name almost that's more uncertain then this Life? and so soon as ever it ends, then begins his distress that shall never end. But yet let him not be too confident that it shall not begin before: Many a man hath felt the torments of Hell on this side the grave, and this Judgment hath commenc'd before his life hath been concluded, *some mens sins go before them to Judgment*, saith the Apostle, *and some mens follow after*, 1 Tim. 5. 24. There is some men feel the Vengeance of a righteous Judge even in this Life; *Spira* professed that he felt the consuming fire of Gods wrath in his heart and Conscience

science whilst he was alive and openly blasphemed his Maker, wishing that he was above him, for he knew (as he said) *that he would have no mercy on him*: O Sirs, the intollerable pains that every impenitent Sinner must speedily undergo, are well worth the pains of a few hours Consideration to prevent, and if you think it not so, you may spare your pains a little longer, till your lamentable experience shall put you quite out of all doubt. If indeed the diversion of your thoughts from so sad an object were the way to secure your Souls, and to keep out of that devouring and unquenchable fire, then you might well excuse your selves from troubling your minds with such thoughts as these: But though you may quench the spirit of God that moveth you to Consider of this and to let it sink into your heart, that you may seek for mercy whilst it may be had; yet you cannot quench the flames of Hell, nor extinguish that fire that must feed upon your soul and body for ever. O how much better is it coolly to Consider the intolerableness of Gods wrath; then to feel the burning heat and extremity of his indignation, when there is no remedy! If it were indeed but a flea bite, you might slight it, and keep your thoughts for something of more weight and moment: Or if it were unavoidable perhaps, you might do wisely not to torment your selves before the time; nor invite such a guest till it comes of his own accord. 'Tis to no purpose to think of such sufferings, which thinking will not prevent; But believe it, it is no flea-bite, nor

a matter to be slighted: Fire, and Sword, and Rack, and all the inventions of Cruelty that were ever found out, are but Sport and Recreation to the Judgment and Condemnation of the Life to come: And because the loss of God and Heaven seems such a tolerable punishment to these Vessels of wrath; Let me tell them that there's no part or member either in their Soul or Body, that shall not be racked with perpetual and eternal pain: *And can thine heart endure or thine hands be strong when he shall come to deal with thee, Ezek. 22.*

14. Thou would'st eat thy bread with trembling, and drink thy drink with terroure and astonishment, if he should pour out on thee some few bitter drops of his displeasure now in this life, *Thou even thou* (saith the *Psalmist* to Almighty God, whose Judgments thou despisest) *art greatly to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry, Psal. 76.* 7. what trembling eyes and what a failing heart have they whom God doth a little terrifie with some frowns of his anger here on earth; you may hear them cry out in the morning would God it were evening, and in the evening would God it were morning, for the fear of thine heart, wherewith thou shalt fear, and for the fear of thine eyes which thou shalt see, *Dent. 28.* 6, 51, 67. How dolefully doth *Job* complain under his outward sufferings (though he had Integrity to support him, and the root of Comfort was within him) *Job. 19.* 28. Death it self (it seems) would have been welcome to him under the heavy pressures which he felt, as

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we may see in Job 3. 20, 21. &c. Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life to the bitter in Soul; which long for death, but it cometh not, and dig for it more than for hid treasures; which rejoyce exceedingly, and are glad when they can find the grave? Why is life given to a man whose way is hid, and whom God hath hedg'd in; for my sighing cometh before I eat, and my roarings are poured out like water? And how David was ready to faint away many a time under the apprehensions of Gods displeasure; it's the design of many a passage in the Psalms to tell you, Psal. 51. 8. Make me to hear of joy and gladness, that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoyce. So Psal. 22. 14, 15. what a sad Lamentation have you? I am poured out like water, and all my bones are out of joynt; my heart is like wax, it's melted in the midst of my bowels; my strength is dried up like a Potsherd, and my tongue cleaveth to my jaws, and thou hast brought me into the dust of death. So Psal. 31. 9, 10. Have mercy on me, O Lord, for I am in trouble; mine eye is consumed with grief, yea my Soul and my Belly; for my life is spent with grief, and my years with sighing, my strength faileth because of mine iniquity, and my bones are consumed. But if you look into the 88 Psal. the case of Heman seems there to be far more sad, because it was more constant and uninterrupted than David's was, vers. 14, 15, 16. &c. Lord, why castest thou off my Soul? why hidest thou thy face from me? I am afflicted, and ready to die from my youth up, whilst I suffer thy terrors I am distracted: Thy fierce wrath goeth over me, thy terrors have cast me off, they came round

round about me daily like water, they compassed me about together; Lover and Friend hast thou put far from me, and mine Acquaintance into darkness. And how pitifully doth the Church complain under the effects of Gods sharp displeasure, as you may see in the Book of the *Lamentations*? So that you may perceive by these few instances, that the wrath of God even on this side Hell is not to be slighted; and if a drop or two light so heavy upon men that had such grace, courage, and fortitude to bear up under it, how heavy must it needs be, when it falls with its whole weight upon men in the state of torments? Wo be to them on whom it falls, it will grind them to powder. If a little sickness be so sharp and terrible sometime, that it makes a stout heart to speak trembling, and turns a fresh coloured face into paleness, and makes the beauty thereof to consume away, like a Garment fretted by a Moth; How will men speak and look under the pains of the second death? How restless are men under some Acute Distempers? they toss up and down, and tell the hours, and watch for the Morning Light, in hope the Sun should rise upon them with healing in its wings; And if men roar under a Fit of the Gout or Collick, what then shall they do in Hell?

And as the torments of Hell are no Flea bite, nor to be slighted by any the stoutest heart, so neither are they unavoidable; for then I should not recommend them to your Consideration. But when the misery of that place cannot find a tongue to utter and express it, nor set forth

the greatness of it, and Consideration is such a certain way to escape it, who but a Mad-man, or one that doth not believe it, will refuse at least some time to think seriously on it till he hath some well grounded hope to escape it? I will take it for granted that that man is resolved to try his strength and see how well he can bear it, that will not endure the sober deliberate thoughts of it in his mind. O Sirs, if when an Angel of light descended from heaven and came and rolled back the stone from the mouth of the Sepulchre, where our Saviour was buried, and sate upon it, the guilty Keepers for fear of him did shake, and became as dead men, *Mat. 28. 2, 4.* How will such as are condemned to Hell shake and tremble, when Angels of Darknes shall continually appear before them? That horrible sight, together with the inward terrours of their own despairing Consciences, will fright them into everlasting trembling and fearfulness: If thou hast a mind to escape that place of perpetual darkness and despair, consider it well now, and let it sink into thy serious thoughts.

Lastly, Consider the infallible truth and certainty of all this. I confess there is something that is dubious and uncertain in every one of these particulars; but yet there is something also that is of the highest certainty; something that you may well make a question of, but yet something that's past all controversie and question among Christians.

Let me give you a brief Recapitulation.

1. There's nothing more certain than that there

there is a God, and that he is Infinite in all perfections ; that he hath made all Creatures, and that he is the absolute Lord and Governour of Mankind, and his principal Benefactor.

Thus much is unquestionable.

But it is a very great question, whether thou dost acknowledge him sincerely for thy Owner, Sovereign, and one that hath every way obliged thee, and art truly devoted to him in heart and life.

2. It's most certain, that he hath made thee for no lower Ends than his service ; and that he hath given thee a Law to teach thee how he will be served ; and that he expecteth thou shouldest be heartily subject to him, and obedient to his Laws ; and that thou should'st believe and patiently wait for his rewards in so doing.

But it is a matter of Enquiry and Self-examination, whether thou hast answered this Intention of God in thy Creation, and obeyed his Laws in a confident expectation of his Rewards.

3. It is past doubt, that thou hast broken the Law of thy Creation, corrupted thy Nature, lived in Disobedience, and cast off the Yoke of thy Creator ; that thou hast by Original and Actual Transgressions forfeited thy life, and all thy other mercies, and deserveth to be dealt with as a Rebel and a Traytor to thy Sovereign Lord and Ruler.

But it is a matter of doubt, and therefore should be seriously enquired by thee, whether thou dost acknowledge from thy heart, and art sensible of thy sin and misery thereby. All the

world are miserable, but they are but few that are affected with their misery.

4. It is certain, that Christ hath shed his Blood to redeem all Mankind, and that Pardon and Remission is offered to all that do heartily repent and believe; *That God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life, John 3. 16.* That none are excepted in this Act of Oblivion and Free-grace, but such as refuse the Mercy offered, and continue in wilful impenitency and unbelief. *You will not come unto me that you may have life, John 5. 40.*

But it is a matter of very great doubt and question, whether thou hast any sincere Repentance towards God, and Faith in our Lord Jesus Christ; whether thou hast sufficiently bewailed thy corrupt Nature that was born with thee into the world, and thy Rebellion against thy Maker in the course of thy life, and wilful transgression of his Laws; and whether thou art so deeply wounded with the bitter sense of thy sin, as to submit to the Yoke and Government of Christ, that he may deliver thee from the bondage of thy sins: For though Christ be offered to all, and did intentionally lay down his life for all, yet none shall reap the fruit and benefit of his sufferings and satisfaction, but such as are broken in heart for their iniquities, and come believingly unto him to bind them up again, and heal them.

5. What more certain than the vanity of all things here below, and their utter insufficiency

to satisfy the Soul of Man, and make it happy? Every one that is not wilfully blind may see how ridiculous the Competition is between God and them. The greatest *Epicures*, and those that dote most upon the world, and admire its glory, will confess thus much when they come to die; and their eyes are then opened, for the most part, whose very Reason and Understanding, as well as their affections, were wholly captivated to its deluding pleasures all their life-long. Ask them now which is better, the Favour of God, or the Pleasures of the World, and they will not then stick to tell you, there's no comparison between them; you shall have a free and a full confession from them.

But yet though the World be such an empty thing, and not worthy to be laid in the balance with the Favour of God, and an Interest in Christ; yet it is a great question whether it is so indeed in thy Estimation and Affections: Let thy practice, and the course and tenour of thy life decide the case; Which doest thou study and endeavour to serve and please most? Which doest thou labour most after, the Food that perisheth, or the Food that endureth? Which doest thou make the most careful provision for, this life, or the life to come? It concerns thee as much as the Salvation of thy Soul comes to, to put this as much out of doubt, as it is past doubt that the World is altogether vanity.

6. How sure is it that Death will shortly come and part thy Soul and Body, and give thee thy mortal wound, and turn thy flesh into corruption? Not a man but must shortly make

his Bed in the Grave, and be forgotten as a dead man out of sight, and leave his substance to those that come after. This is a clear truth, and hath a sound confession from all the world; the experience of all our Forefathers is a clear proof.

But yet though this truth is so fully attested by the confession of all the living, and the experience of all the Dead; yet it is a very great doubt whether thou dost remember and consider thy latter end, and improve thy life, as that which will not always last. Wo to thee if this be not as certain as the other!

7. Nothing more sure, than that there is a Publick *Audit*, at which all men must give up their Accounts; a general day of *Oyer* and *Terminer*, where every one must undergo an impartial Tryal and Examination.

But it is uncertain whether thou dost sincerely believe such a day, and dost make answerable preparations; and whether thou dost live as in the sight of thy Judge, it behoves thee to consider.

8. It's matter of greatest certainty, that there is a State of unspeakable happiness for Believers, and that there is a State of endless and unsufferable misery to which Unbelievers shall be condemned; and when men are arrived thither, their condition is unalterable; there's no possibility that they should lose the one, or ever be released from the other. These are all matters of the highest certainty; all the doubt is, whether thou hast lived under the power of these Truths by frequent Consideration; and whether

whether they had such influence on thee, as things of such certainty, weight and worth should have.

You see what is certain, and what is doubtful and uncertain in all these particulars; and in both respects they will deserve thy attentive, heedful thoughts, and thy most impartial Consideration. The things that are certain will never make their due impression upon thy heart, nor operate according to their worth, nor put thee upon answerable practice till they be again and again considered. The things that are uncertain, will never be resolved till they be frequently considered: Men regard not the Judgment to come, because they will not be brought to consider the certainty of it, and how much it doth concern them. Men slight the Torments of Hell, and Joys of Heaven, because they will not consider the certainty of them. Would any one fall in love with the world, if he did but consider how certainly it will deceive him? Would men live so improvidently, and spend their strength and time so impertinently, if they did but seriously consider that they must certainly die, and speed Eternally as they have lived? Would men set up their own will for a Law, and live to themselves, and put the fear of God out of their hearts, if they did but consider that God is certainly their Maker and Sovereign, and that they owe perfect subjection to his Person, and obedience to his Laws? Would men live so absurdly, and forget their main Errand in the world, and the principal business of their lives, if they did but consider that

God certainly sent them into the world for this very end and purpose to serve him, and live in love and obedience to him? In a word, would men wipe their mouths after so much Rebellion and Disobedience to God, as if they were Innocent, and be so impenitent and unaffected with their sins, if they did but consider how certain it is, that without Repentance there's no hope of pardon; and that they must smart for their sin here by Repentance, or else hereafter in Eternal misery and desperation; and that Christ will be a Saviour to none but those that thus smart for their sin, and feel its intolerable burthen, and fly unto him by Faith as their only refuge. O if we did enough consider the great certainty of these things, they would have another effect and operation on us, than usually they have upon the best of us; much less would they suffer us to live in such Atheism, and contempt of Christ and Salvation, as the most of men live. As sure as thou sinnest now thou shalt be judged for it, and that to Everlasting Condemnation, if thy serious Repentance step not in between; as sure as thou livest now, thou shalt shortly die; and as sure as thou treadest upon the Earth, so sure shalt thou lie down in it e're long, and be trodden under foot. Look up and behold the Heavens above thee, that glister with so many Stars of light; as sure as they now hang over thy head, so certainly shall they be under thy feet e're a few years more be past: If thou hast laid up thy Treasure in Heaven, I mean, if thy chief joy and delight be there; if there be any trust in the

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the Lord, any truth and certainty in his Word, these things which I have recommended to thy frequent Consideration, are Truths of the highest certainty and importance; the flattering World may deceive thee, thy false dissembling heart may deceive thee; health, and strength, and friends may prove treacherous and unfaithful; all thy worldly hopes may become like a Spiders Web, *Job 8. 14.* The Heavens over thy head may turn into darkness, and the Sun and Stars may refuse to give their light, the Earth may fail under thy feet, and reel to and fro, and stagger like a Drunken Man, and the Inhabitants thereof may be at their wits end, but the Word of God will never fail thee; it shall be accomplished in despite of all opposing power, and the threatnings and promises thereof shall stand, when all other things shall fall to the ground, and be like water that's spilt on it, that cannot be gathered up again; *Heaven and Earth shall pass away, but not one jot nor tittle of the Word of God shall pass, till all be fulfilled, Mat. 5. 18. And Mat. 24. 35.* God that hath established the Earth so firmly (though it hang upon nothing) and it abideth, and shall abide till the great Earthquake shall come; he that hath fixed the Ordinances of Heaven and Earth, and settled the appointed times and seasons of Spring and Summer, Winter and Harvest, Day and Night, and they continue to this day (without variation) according to his Decree, for all are his servants, *Psal. 119. 90, 91. and Gen. 8. 22.* will make good the word that is gone out of his mouth, and it shall not return

turn till it hath accomplish'd that which he hath spoken, *Isa. 55. 11.* And therefore *David* acknowledgeth that he had magnified his Word above all his Name. So much for the matter of our Consideration, or the things that we should frequently consider; I conclude with that in *Psal. 107. 43. Who so is wise, will consider these things, and they shall understand the loving kindness of the Lord.*

I come in the next place to speak to the *manner*, or to shew *how* Consideration should be exercised. *First*, after you have lift up your heart to God for the heavenly Light and Assistance, set your self *seriously* to the duty as in his sight and presence. Trifling with all matters of moment is inconsistent with the nature of such things, and betrays our folly. But it is the bane and poison of all Religion, and a wicked disparagement both to that and our selves: *if whatsoever our hand findeth to do, we should do it with our might, (Eccles. 9. 10.)* then much more should we rouse up our selves, and put to all our strength when we have works of the greatest consequence in our hands, we must not be slothful in such business as this is especially, *but fervent in spirit serving the Lord, Rom. 12. 11. Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain,* is a precept that extends it self to all Religious Acts and strictly forbids a slight and customary performance of them. Thou art guilty of Irreverence and contempt of such sacred things, and consequently of God himself to whom they are nearly related, when thou medlest in them, with a careless and wandering spirit, and mayest expect

expect that the anger of the Lord should war
 hot against thee, when thou art so cold in his
 service. If God threatned to spew the Church
 of *Laodicea* out of his mouth, because she was
 but lukewarm in his service, *Rev. 3. 16.* He will
 certainly deal worse with them that are stone-
 cold in their approaches to him. The heart
 and soul of Consideration, and all other Religi-
 ous Acts are wanting, when the heart, and soul,
 and strength are not imployed in them: For
 when earnestness and serious intention of the
 mind and heart are deficient, it not only turns
 Religious Acts into meer form, but makes them
 utterly unsuccessful: You will miss of your in-
 tended purpose, when you come to God and
 seek for mercy in a careless and customary man-
 ner: you will never obtain wisdom at the hands
 of God if you know not how to be importu-
 nate for it; when you are shut up in affliction
 and misery and cannot get out, if you cannot
 cry aloud and knock at the door of grace it will
 never be opened to you. The Lord will give
 you a praying spirit fervent in supplication, if
 ever he intend to give you the thing prayed for:
 He will give you a heart seriously to Consider
 if ever he work the saving truths into your
 heart: if you are not serious in the service of
 God you cannot be sincere, and how well God
 will accept that service in which sincerity is
 wanting, look into the word of God and Judge.
 The Consideration I am pressing you to, is a prin-
 cipal part of Gods Worship, (I speak not of
 that which is occasional and ordinary, for such
 Consideration must accompany all your Actions
 both

both toward God and men ; if ever they be prudently managed) but of that Consideration , which is set and solemn, and that requires some time to be set apart for it , as well as Prayer and other Duty ; during which time we must no more intermix our thoughts with worldly matters, then we must in Prayer, and Hearing, and Reading the Word of God : But our Meditations must be tied to the most weighty saving truths till we begin to feel the power of them upon our hearts ; that so they may command our Lives. 'Tis such serious Consideration as this, about the greatest and uncontroverted truths for some set time together, till suitable affections and resolutions be kindled in us, which is such an excellent part of Gods Worship: because it inspires the Soul with Life and Fitness for all other Worship and Service, and if you do not awaken, and call up the powers of your Soul and seriously imploy them in this work of Consideration, you are never like to see the beauty and excellency of these saving truths, nor to feel the mighty power of them. Ignorance and prejudice have so fast closed the eyes of your understanding, that unless you rub hard they will never be opened ; and the affections are so backward to the most weighty things, that unless they be set upon in good earnest, and enforced by the evidence and mighty power of these truths they will not stir to any purpose, nor ripen your Soul for Practice.

Secondly, You must narrowly watch over your heart, and keep it close to the work ; and when it refuseth, you must use the Authority God hath

hath given you over it to compel it. Though the Soul hath not that absolute command over its own thoughts and affections which once it had before it rebelled against God, yet it hath not quite lost its Sovereignty and power. Experience doth sufficiently assure us, that we can command our thoughts to this or that subject, & keep them on it, if we will take pains with them; even those that want the special Grace of God, and are unsanctified in heart, can yet bend their thoughts to think on God, his Attributes, and his Word and Works, the Life to come, the vanity of Creatures, and make very pertinent moving discourses on them: else none can Preach but such as are endued with saving Light and Knowledge, much more may they command their Meditations to these heavenly Subjects, that have some prevailing love to them which every Carnal man is deprived of. I know the affections are not so easily compell'd as the thoughts: It must be the clearness, and importunity of the understanding that must excite and quicken the affections: But yet serious Meditation on such weighty moving objects as these are (on which your Meditations should be exercised) will do much to stir the fire, and make the heart feel what the mind doth so clearly understand; It is the way that God hath prescribed for a man to prevail with his own heart, to take it off from vanity, and enamour it with those things that are Divine and Heavenly. Objects and moving reasons kept much upon the mind by serious thoughts, are the great Engine appointed both by Nature and by Grace to turn about the

the Soul of Man; and they are to the Soul as Meat and Drink, and taking in the Air to the Body. Objects, well considered, do turn the Soul into their Nature (saith a Reverend and a most skilful Divine) when therefore your mind begins to be weary of these thoughts, and to rove and wander, fetch it in again, and lay your charge and command upon it; and if that will not do, urge the Command & Authority of God, and be sure not to let it baffle thee: *Quicquid imperavit Animas obtinuit*, saith that Excellent Heathen, *Sen. de ira*. You are like to profit no further in the heavenly duty of Consideration at first, than you force and compel your self: *Tantum proficies quantum tibi vim intuleris: Claud. Clem. Bib.* But the success will make amends for all. Think it not a tedious unpleasant task to attend the Affairs of your own Soul, and to do a work so pleasing unto God. What hast thou thy time and faculties for, if not to imploy them in his service that gave thee both time and faculties? Dost thou grudge to set them a work to thine own unspeakable advantage? Had'st thou rather live like a Beast, than like a Man in the best use and exercise of thy Reason? Check thy self after this manner when thy Mind begins to be unruly, and thy fleshly brutish part would call thee off from the most rational improvement of thy time in such wise and provident thoughts for thine Eternal happiness: sometimes thy mind will loiter, and then it will be thy duty to spur it up by the most perswasive quickning Arguments thou canst suggest to it; (and such thou shouldest have ready at hand to serve

serve for that use) sometimes it will divert, and then thou should'st Rein it in with as much resolution, as thou would'st an unruly Beast that would carry thee out of thy way; and when thy heart is ready to frustrate all these helps, intermix some short Ejaculations to God with thy Meditations, and appeal to him for strength to Master thy own thoughts and affections: If thou gaineſt the Victory, thou haſt done more than if thou hadſt conquered a Kingdom, *Prov.* 16. 32.

Thirdly, Addreſs thy ſelf to this Duty with the confident expectations of a bleſſing: Think there is more to be gained this way, than by any other exerciſe of thy mind; the ſtronger thy hopes are of a bleſſing that will answer all thy pains, the more chearfully will the work go on. If thou expecteſt nothing in this way of obedience to God, and exerciſe of thy thoughts, but art dragg'd to it meerly by the threats of thine own Conſcience, that telleth thee roundly it is thy duty, it will be done with little pleaſure, and as little profit: But if thou wouldeſt make a Vertue of Neceſſity, and perform that willingly that muſt be done however, then ſweeten thy labour by the Harveſt that will come in, and take as much pains to gratiſie thy Soul for ever, and to ſow in it the Seed of endleſs felicity, as thou would'st to ſow thy Land, that thou mayeſt enjoy the Crop that it promiſeth to bring thee forth. Thou doeſt thy ſelf wrong to leave out ſuch thoughts as theſe when thou art ſetting about the work of Conſideration; they will infuſe life into thy Meditations,

tions, to think that they shall not be in vain in the Lord. The harder the Duty is that is enjoined, the greater is the gain after it is conscientiously perform'd. It's sinful despair and unbelief that weakneth our hands to Prayer and Meditation, and cutteth the Nerves and Sinews of all Duty. This bringeth a damp upon us, and discourageth all our endeavours: As ever therefore thou would'st perform this Duty with any life, perform it in hope. If thou hadst no other hope but to please God in the performance of a Duty so highly acceptable to him, even this alone were well worth thy pains: But when thou mayest be sure that this Duty of Consideration therefore pleaseth God, because it is so fit a means to advance thy self in saving knowledge and vertue, and to make the best improvement of thine intellectuals and affections, and to lay the true and solid grounds of endless pleasure and felicity, thou hast a Spur indeed to quicken thee: But this is not all, thou mayst also hope oft-times to find the sweetest content and pleasure in such exercise of thy thoughts. So that whereas there are but three sorts of that which we call good, or three Capitals, to which all that is desirable may be referr'd, viz. *Bonum honestum, utile, & jucundum*: For all that is good is either (1.) Honest. (2.) Profitable. (3.) Pleasant: Thou hast ground sure enough to hope, that they will all concur in the Conscientious performance of this Duty. To expect indeed to grow wise in any other way than God hath authorized and appointed, would be a foolish confidence and presumption,

and

and such as would certainly end in disappointment and shame; But to expect a blessing in such an unquestionable way of duty, (as Consideration is) which both nature and Scripture do so plainly teach thee, this is no rash but a well grounded hope: Address your self to the duty of Consideration with such hopes as these; and you shall find (if other necessities also do concur) that the work will prosper in your hand, and you also will prosper by it: *Then shalt thou understand the fear of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God, Prov. 2. 5. Yea, thou shalt understand Righteousness, and Judgment, and Equity, and every good Path, vers. 9.* Try this course, and throw out all disturbing hindring thoughts out of thy mind, and do but consider some of these weighty Truths which I have recommended to thee, and assault thine own affections with the moving power of them, and see whether thy time be mis-spent, or thy labour lost. Assuredly Wisdom will enter into thine heart, and Knowledge will be pleasant unto thy Soul; Discretion shall preserve thee, and Understanding shall keep thee, and deliver thee from the way of the evil man, from the man that speaketh & thinketh froward things, who leaveth the paths of uprightness, to walk in the ways of darkness, *Prov. 2. 10, 11, 12, 13.* If the hope of a little worldly gain, will put the Merchant upon such difficult, tedious, yea and dangerous Voyages, and to expose himself to the raging boystrous Seas and Winds, and to go visit the Savage and Barbarous Nations, that he may bring back a little fading Treasure; would not

the hope of far better and greater gain put Sails to thine endeayours, and quicken thee to Consideration? It's certain, that if thou doest account Wisdom and Grace better than Gold and Silver, it would do so. In this Spiritual Trade of Commerce with God by Meditation, there is less of danger, and more of profit and advantage: Though I confess the profit is quite of another kind, but yet such as will yield thee more pleasure and content than any worldly gain and Emolument can do; yea, mayest thou not expect a Harvest, far more desirable to a man that is not brutish in his affections, after one Months exercise of this Duty, though but one half hour in a day, than the poor industrious Plow-man can after ten times as much spent in a dirty and unpleasant labour: And yet how chearfully doth he rise to the Plow and Cart before the day break, and despise his rest and ease for a small Crop which he expects; and it may be when all is done, his hopes are drowned by unseasonable Showres, and too great a glut of moist and rainy weather; or else they wither through too great an excess of heat and drought? But God will not fail to water thine endeavours, if thou wilt bend thy mind daily to Consideration, and Crown thine endeavours with a blessing. How indefatigably will a poor man thresh and toil all the day and year long for a poor contemptible Livelihood? And would'st thou not take an hours pains every day to live a glorious happy life for ever, if thou didst but hope for such a Reward? Certainly they expect no such Reward,

ward, or else value it at a lower rate than their worldly ease and pleasure, that will not consider upon such terms as these; and they are like to neglect or faint in the work of Consideration, that do not address themselves to it with such hopes as these. I have done with the Directions that concern both the *matter* and *manner* of this Duty of Consideration; and now come

In the last place to tell you, *what End* you should propose to your self in the exercise of this Duty.

The *Ends* that you should propose are these two;

First, That you might get, and grow in the love of God, joy and delight in him, praise and admiration of him, gratitude and thankfulness to him; and so God may be more highly advanced in your heart and affections.

Secondly, And that you may grow up to a more habitual, firm and settled resolution of obedience to his Laws, and submission to his Providences, and so God may be more highly exalted in your life and practice.

First, The first great End that you should aim at in the exercise of Consideration, is that you may provoke and strengthen those good affections of love to God, delight in him, admiration of him, thankfulness to him; and so to raise his Authority in your heart: Not that I exclude any other holy affections, either of the Irascible or Concupiscible Faculty, whereby the Sovereignty of God over Soul and Body is made more glorious and sensible: Nei-

ther do I except any Acts of the Understanding, such as are esteem and admiration of him, assent to his Word and Truth, both in Nature, but especially in Scripture, whereby way is made for these higher and more Noble affections of Love, Joy, and Praise. But you must see that all the other affections be guided to, and end in these, especially Love: For this is the Leading Act or Affection of the Soul (that virtually contains, yea and commands all the rest) and doth enthrone the Object to which it is mainly devoted in the heart, and sets the Crown upon its head, and offereth up the whole train of affections that come after it to its devoir and service. S. *Austin* seems to maintain that love is the only passion that doth agitate us, and hath its operation in us; for all the passions that molest our Souls, are but so many disguised Loves; our fears and desires, our hopes and despairs, our delights and sorrows, are Countenances which Love puts on according to the Events of good or bad success. And as the Sea carries different Names; according to the divers parts of the Earth which it washeth, so doth Love change her Name, according to the different state wherein she finds her self: His words are, *Amor inhians habere quod amatur Cupiditas est, Idem habens eoque fruens Letitia est: Fugiens quod ei Adversatur, Timor est. Idque cum Acciderit sentiens Tristitia est.* The truth is (as most now grant) there are no Passions or Affections of the Soul that are distinguished from it self, but the Soul it self is thus variously denominated, according to the various Objects about which it is exercised; yea, the

Understanding and Will are no otherwise distinguished than by their Objects, and are not Faculties really distinct : But the same Soul, as it sees, apprehends, and discerneth either truth or falshood, it's called Understanding ; and as it chuseth or refuseth good and evil, it's called Will. But (though you suppose this) yet there are two Primitive and most Essential Acts or Affections of the Will, and those are *Volition* and *Nolition*, commonly called Love and Hatred, of which all the other Affections have a Spice, and from whence they are derived. All the Passions which are usually ascribed to the Concupiscible Faculty, flow from *Volition* or Love ; and all that are commonly reckoned as Retainers to the Irascible Faculty, flow from *Nolition* or Hatred. These be the two Acts whereby the Soul cleaves to its most endeared Object, (wherein it placeth its rest and happiness) and whereby it fights against all Adversaries that would take it out of its arms, or hinder it from fruition.

These are therefore the main Affections that you should endeavour more and more to root and fortifie by your Meditations, (even love to God, and hatred of all that stands in any competition with, or contradiction to him.) Now since the World with its Pleasures, Profits and Honours, is *the cursed Trinity in Unity* that most opposeth God, and that is most likely to draw your Soul first to flight, and then to rebel against the *Blessed Trinity in Unity*: your great intention in the work of Consideration, must be to fortifie and strengthen your love to

the last, and your hatred to the first, to hold to the one, and despise the other, *Mat.* 6. 24. For you cannot serve God and the World, because their Commands are quite contrary ; and whilst you do fulfill the will of the one, you do *ipso facto* slight the other. Indeed where two Masters stand in subordination one to the other, there we may serve and please them both ; but then they are not two, but one Master ; so long as the Commands of one do not cross, but promote and further the Commands of the other. In this case God and the World may both be loved. So long as our love to the world doth not exceed those bounds which God hath set, and we love them no farther than as they further us in his service. For instance, friends may help us forward towards Heaven, and quicken us to our duty ; and friends may incumber, discourage and hinder us in our obedience to God : The first sort one may and must love for that very end ; the second sort, we ought to slight and despise, so far as they are such a snare to us. Do not I hate them, O Lord, that hate thee ? and am not I grieved with those that rise up against thee ? I hate them with a perfect hatred, I count them mine Enemies, saith *David*, though it may be some of them might be his friends by birth and Alliance, or pretence, *Psal.* 139. 21, 22. Not but that we own some kind and degree of love, even to such as these ; but not a love of Complacency, which is the most proper sort of love, and the highest degree : we may look upon them with a love of Benevolence and Compassion, desiring
their

their Repentance and Reformation, if they are such Enemies of God as are curable: And the reason is, because there is some mixture of good with all their wickedness, and this we must love them for. So we should examine all other worldly comforts, and see how far they kindle, and how far they extinguish the love of God in you; and so far you must love or hate them. Well, in the exercise of Consideration, you must still have one eye to this affection of love, and see that it grow stronger and stronger, and another upon every thing that you seem to love too much, whether it be meat, or drink, or apparel, or friends, or credit, or health, or life it self, to disparage them, and lessen your esteem of, and affections to them; and think what a vast difference there is between any worldly comfort here on Earth, and God the Author of that and all other comforts: I mean no other disparagement than such a one as makes them know their place, and keep their rank, and lays them at the feet of him that ought to be a thousand times dearer to us: And so the Apostle counted all things dung and dross in comparison with Christ, but not otherwise, *Phil. 3. 8.* Now the more distinct and certain knowledge you have of God, the more you are like to love him; for he is such an Object, that if he be once thoroughly known, he cannot but be loved. Nature and Reason it self will sufficiently assure you, that his Word is the highest Demonstration of the truth of any thing he affirmeth, and cannot possibly be false: The more therefore you are perswaded that the Scripture or Bible

is his Word, wherein he hath made the plainest Discoveries of himself, the more clear and certain apprehensions of God you are like to have. It will be therefore very subservient to the love of God to confirm and strengthen your assent to the Truth or Divine Authority of Scripture, and to make that sometimes the immediate design and business of your Meditations; to which end you must have Arguments at hand to prove Scripture to be the Word of God, and to enforce your assent: Hereby also you will have some considerable advantage to the exercise of all those other affections, that must help to kindle and encrease the love of God in you, such as are Repentance and Faith in Christ; for there you have the fullest discoveries of the odiousness of Sin, and the necessity of Repentance, and the Excellency of Christ and Faith in him, who took our Flesh, and died for this very end, that he might reconcile God to us, and us to God, and recover our affections to him, that the world had abus'd and drawn away; and as the exercise of Repentance will promote the love of God in you, by mortifying that which is contrary to it; so Faith in Christ much more; for the more we love and subject our selves to him, who is the Wisdom of the Father, and the highest pledge of his love to sinful man, the more we are like to love the Father himself that both sent him, and accepted the satisfaction that he offered to him in our behalf. And then lastly, the more we are exercised in the praises of God, the more we are exercised in love it self; for this is an immediate effect of love.

So that it should be one end of Consideration to exercise and quicken those affections : viz. (1.) *Assent to the truth of Scripture.* (2.) *Contempt of the world,* and all its pleasures, as it fights against God. (3.) *Repentance for all former sins,* and present unfitness to the love and service of God. (4.) *Faith in Christ.* (5.) *Love to God directly.* (6.) *Praise and thankfulness to him* : Not that I exclude other simple or mixt affections, but because I intend anon to give you some help for the better exercise of these particularly, which I intended at first for my own private use.

Secondly, As it must be the end of Consideration, so to actuate and strengthen these or some other holy affections towards God, and so to advance him in your heart; so it must be your last end to strengthen your resolution of obedience to him, both active and passive, and so to advance him in your life and practice. This should and would be the last end of your daily Consideration, if it be right : As it is Gods end when he requireth the *Heart*, that he might have the *Life* also, for he knows that the life and practice will be suitable to the heart, which is the great Principle of them; so it must be our end also, in the exercise of our Meditations, to promote the Kingdom of God in our heart, that we may the better honour him in our life. Remember therefore in the daily exercise of this Duty, that you grow more resolved for Obedience : For as love to God will be the fruit of your Meditations, if they be serious; so Obedience will be the fruit of your
love,

love, if it be sincere: And as you are never like to do or suffer the Will of God with chearfulness, and to grow in Obedience, unless you grow stronger in deliberate purpose and resolution; so you are never like to grow in resolution, if you do not grow in the love of God.

I am next to give you some assistance towards the daily exercise of the *Six forementioned Affections*; one whereof belongs to the Understanding, the other to the Will.

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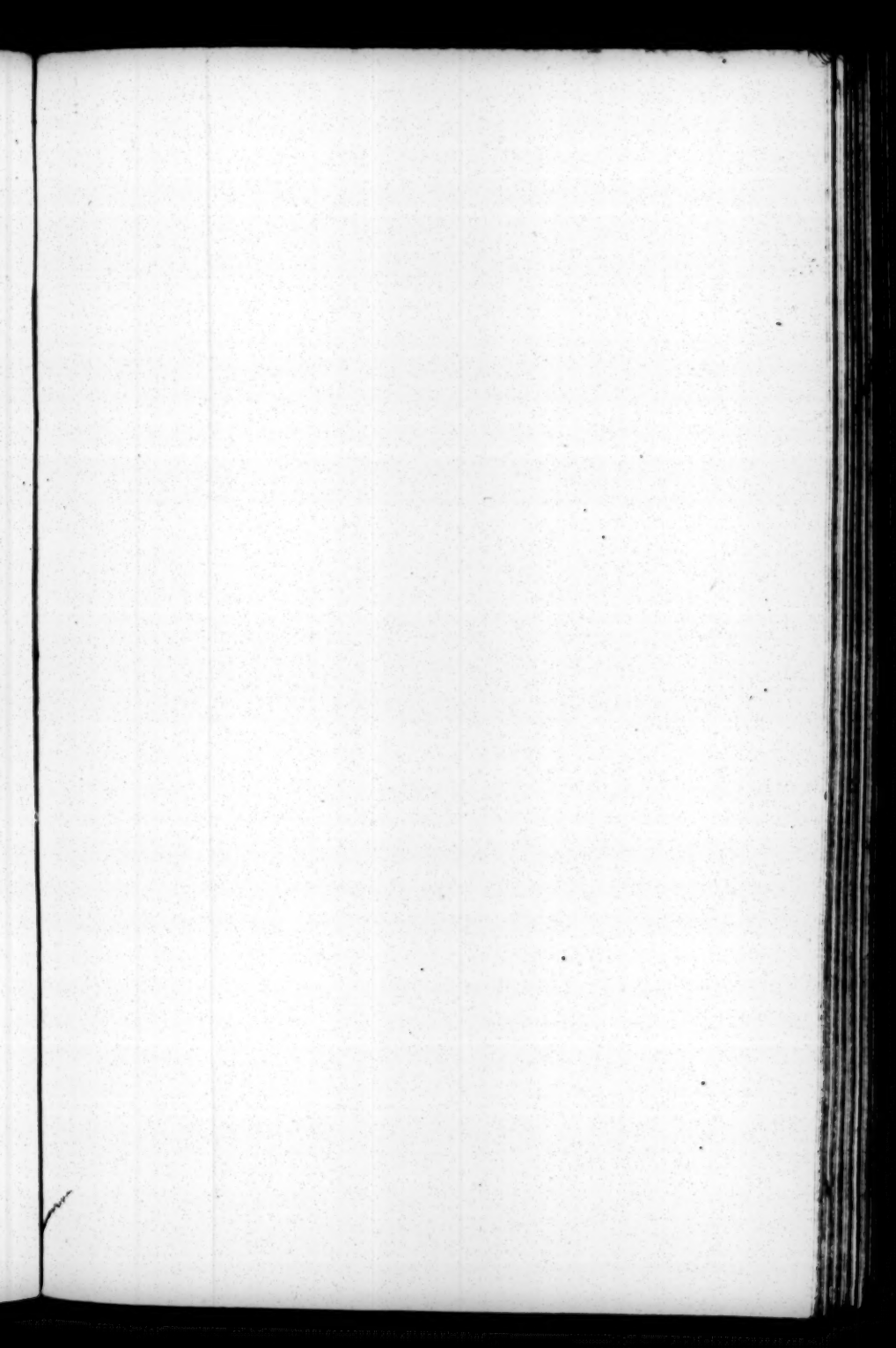
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Some Arguments to assure and persuade the *Infallible Truth* and *Divine Authority of Scripture*, for the Exercise of that part of Faith that consists in the Intellectuals Assent.

Argument I.

THose Writings whose Pen-men were Authorized and approved by God, must needs be of Divine Authority.

But the Writings of the Old and New Testament had such Pen-men. Therefore, &c.

The Major Proposition is beyond all doubt, and past dispute.

The Minor Proposition, (viz.) That the Pen-men of the Old and New Testament, were Men Authorized and approved by God in that very Work, is evident in that these Writers did attest and prove the Inspiration they did pretend to by frequent, Reall, and uncontrouled Miracles, which none but God could enable them to do. For,

First, They were unquestionably above the power of meer Man.

Secondly, These Writers thereof must derive their power from some invisible Author, either Good or Bad: But from the Devil or any bad Spirit they could not. For,

First, Some [at least] of those Miracles which were wrought by the Pen-men of the Old and New Testament were without the Sphehre of all natural Causation, and were such as no created Cause, or meer natural Agent can possibly produce, by the meer stock of their own strength. [Now the bad Spirits are no better than Creatures, and can work no other waies but by natural Efficiency and Causation, and therefore could not do some of these works.]

Such was the Raising of the Dead to Life, and the giving sight to those which were born perfectly blind. Not to instance in any other: [Though perchance to cure all sorts of Diseases, with a word, and in a moment, is more than the Devil can seemingly imitate, or any one can do, that hath not assistance from God.] Now the Rule is certain, *A privatione ad habitum non datur Regressus naturaliter*: [if the privation be Total:] *Nam productio totius entis, & entis ex materia prorsus ineptâ*, are the Specialties of God alone, and Prerogatives Royal annexed to his Crown, who hath ordained the constant course of Causes and Effects, which we call *Nature*, or the *Course of Nature*, and hath made all those Agents that work in that orderly Course [which we call *Natural Causes*.]

Secondly, If the evil Spirits could do such works as these [which yet they cannot, as hath been proved] yet it would be inconsistent with the infinite Wisdom, Truth and Goodness, and the nature and being of that Government, which as supreme Rector of Mankind, he doth exercise, to suffer his Creatures to be thus deluded, and to leave Man under an Impossibility of ever attaining to the knowledge of his Will in a rational way, and by such objective Evidence as may work conviction upon his own Faculties, and the Faculties of others with whom he shall discourse.

Thirdly, And yet if the Devil could do such works, and God should permit him [neither of] which can be as hath been made appear] yet it would not consist with his own interest, to countenance and credit such Writers as these were, and to Confirm *Such a Doctrine*, that's so destructive to his nature, and that tends so visibly to the overthrow of his Kingdom: For if Satan were thus divided and should fight after this desperate Manner against himself, his Kingdom could not stand; *Mat. 12. 25.* Which is the very strength of our Saviours Argument when he was calumniated by the Jews to have wrought those mighty works which he did by the Power of *Belzebub*: Undoubtedly either the Devil himself must want that that's Essential to an Intelligent Being, &c. Spirit and void utterly of all understanding; or else the man must, that can think the Devil would so effectually promote his own Downfal, and strike such a blow at the very Root of his own kingdom: For we see by Experience where this Doctrine is

once received, the worship of Devils and all Magick Arts, and impious Practices do forthwith vanish: And the one true God is served with detestation of Devils. And the Doctrine of Christ, for Confirmation whereof these works were done, forbids us to worship Devils, and draws us away from all pollutions wherewith the evil Spirits are delighted: Whose power and Force was broken by Christ's coming as *Porphry* himself acknowledgeth; And therefore *Origen*, *Arnob.* *Tertulian*, *Iustin Martyr*, *Athanasius*, *Clemens Alexandrinus* *Athenagoras*, *Lactantius*, with the rest that dealt with the Heathens, do make the pure Excellency of Christs Doctrine above all other Doctrine, whereby it promoteth Holiness, and Justice, and order in the World, and strongly opposeth all impious and unrighteous Practices in which the Devils are delighted, whereby their Kingdom is very much weakened, and in some places utterly ruined, one of the main Arguments for the Christian Faith: Would the Devil ever set any seal, or give any confirming Testimony to such Precepts as command that which he hateth, to such Promises as encourage Men every where to hate and oppose him, to such threatening, as tend exceedingly to discourage and bring to repentance all his Confederates? Would he helpon such a Doctrine, that teacheth Men, What a filthy malicious Spirit he is, and from what a Happiness he fell, and what a design he driveth on against God, and whatsoever hath the Face of Goodness, and how he hateth Mankind, and would bring all Men into the same cursed condition with himself? Would he have Men know his devices least he should come
upon

upon them unawares ? And would he have them abhor, and tremble at the mention of his very Name ; These are the effects that this Doctrin is like to have upon Mens Minds : And therefore, it's past doubt, that if the Devil could work Miracles, he would never do it in the present case, nor give the least Countenance to such writings.

But if he were Master of such a Seal, and had that Faculty, he would rather lend it to the Sects that seek to disparage, undermine, and cry down these Writings in the World: He perfectly hateth that parity that runneth in every vein of the Christian Doctrin, which made *Aeneas Sylv.* say *ut Plat. p. 328.*

*Christiana Fides si Miraculis non esset approbata,
Honestate suâ recipi debuit.*

And therefore it would be a wonder indeed, if he should do a Miracle to confirm it: The Miracles therefore that were wrought in Attestation of this Doctrin, never came from him: He had no more hand in the Miracles, than he had in the Doctrin they bore witness to, or than he would have in the overthrow of his own Kingdom: And therefore Mr. *Stillingfleet* Orig. Sac. l. 2. 10. well makes it a Test, or Criterium of Miracles wrought by a Divine Power, where they tend to the overthrow of Satans Power in the World.

And this Argument taken from Miracles conjunct with the Holy Doctrin which they ratifie and attest, is such a demonstration of the Truth of the Mosaical Religion before Christ, and to the

Christian Religion since, that to attribute these Miracles to the Devil, which could not possibly be wrought by any other Power than the Finger of the Holy-Ghost, is now commonly thought by the most learned and judicious Divines, to be, *The Blasphemy against the Holy-Ghost*, &c. The unpardonable Sin: Thus *Athanasius*, *Episcopus*, and *Dr. Hammond* thought, and *Mr. Baxter* hath demonstratively shewed in his *Treat. of Infidelity*.

The only Exception that can have any shew of Pretence to invalidate this Argument, is, that the matters of fact seem to be Questionable, (1) Some may possibly question, whether ever such Miracles were wrought to confirm the Scriptures? or whether ever there were such a person as Christ that did such Mighty works, that dyed and rose again from the Dead, and poured forth a Holy and Miraculous Spirit upon his Followers, for the Conviction of Infidels.

Answer, The matter of Fact can be questioned with no more Reason, than whether there be such a City as *Rome* or *Constantinople*, by the Persons that never saw them: or whether there ever lived such a Person as *Julius* or *Augustus Caesar*: For there is the same, or greater Evidence for THOSE, than there is for *These*: But there is none that will question these.

And the Reason is, because this their Assent is grounded upon *Two Principles* that will not suffer any dissent.

The first is, It's impossible that so many Men in so many Ages should meet or combine in a Lye, when they get nothing by their Lye, *Nulla raram testis*

testis debet habere, Ovid—ubi premia falsi ibidem.

The second is, It's not possible the senses of so many Men should fail them, and that they should all mistake and be deluded, that were eye and Earwitnesses of the matter of Fact, and both saw and heard the Authors of those Writings, and the Miracles which they wrought to confirm them: See, *Pet. Harp. de Mendoza Phys. disp. 8. de Anima. Sect. 3. and Sect. 23. 14, 5. pag. 370.*

And the same Author to *This Question*, what sort of Evidence is that by which I believe that there is such a place as *Rome* upon the witness of so many Men asserting it? *Answereth,* It is Physical: For it is impossible even in a Physical sense, that so many Men in so many Ages should [so] lye: so that I have no less Evidence that there is a City called *Rome*, than that all Fire is heating: Thus he, See *Mr. Baxter's Spirits witness to the Truth of Christianity, pag. 68.*

The same or as infallible Physical Evidence have we of the Truth of the Miracles, by which the Holy-Ghost did witness to the Truth of the Christian Faith; For,

First, It's naturally impossible that so many Churches, in so many Countries of the World, at such a distance, should combine to lye, in telling the world that the Holy-Ghost was given, and Tongues spoken, and Miracles done amongst them, for so many Years, if it had not been so.

Secondly, Man hath a Nature as well as a Free-will, and the understanding naturally enclines to Truth, and the will hath naturally, and of Necessity Good (as Good) for its object; And man

as well as Brutes hath a Nature, that cannot but love it self ; and desire its own wellfare, and abhor death and Misery, Temporal and Eternal ; And therefore tho. here and there a Man in some desperate Passion may make away himself, yet we are Physically certain, that it must be a thing which they do indeed believe, that must perswade Cities, and Countries of People in their wits, to cast their Estates and Lives into the Hands of Bloody Tyrants, and utterly ruin their worldly hopes : And especially when they do all this in hope of a Blessedness in the Life to come : Where it is impossible that so many Men of Reason should expect to be blessed, for conspiring in a Lye ; but rather to be everlastingly cursed and miserable, by the justice of that God from whom they expect their Reward.

I conclude, therefore that the Case being resolved into Mans Natural Principles, and inclinations so clearly as it is, There is natural Evidence of the Truth of these Miracles :

This infallible Certainty that we have (or may have) is grounded upon *Universal Tradition* whereby [*Universal*] is not meant the Consent of all Men, in the World [no more than all the world is meant by *Universal Church*) but that which is opposed to the *Private Tradition* of the *Romanists*, and hath a certain Moral Universality, and is built as to the Certainty upon Common, natural, and rational Grounds, and not on the Romish pretended Authority, or Infallibility, See *Mr. Baxter Pref. to his Book of Infidelity*.

Argument the I I.

2. **T**Hat Doctrine or those Writings that have been allways owned and countenanced by God, ever since they were written, must needs be Divine, at least, if they pretend so to be.

But the Doctrine contained in the Old and New Testament, or the writings commonly called the Scriptures by way of Excellency are such : therefore as God did own them in their very Conception and Birth, by the many Miracles that did attest them, so he hath owned them ever since they were conceived, and brought forth, in making them instrumental to so great a Change and Reformation in the world.

The hand of God doth appear most signally.

- | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1. In the Plantation | } of this Doctrine |
| 2. In the Propagation | |

The power and special Providence of God is observable.

First, In the Plantation of this Doctrine, if it be seriously considered.

1 What

1. What instruments he made use of.
2. What course they took to plant it.
3. The Quality of the Doctrine they were to infuse and plant.
4. The Mighty Enemies it had, and yet
5. It took Root and prospered in despite of all.

*And for the First, (viz.) The instruments that God made use of, that the effect might be acknowledged from him alone ; It was two or three poor despicable Fishermen, and Mechanicks, that first broached and planted this Doctrine, which God so wonderfully watered, and prepared room before it, and did cause it to take deep root, and it quickly filled the Earth: The Hills were covered with the Shadow of it, and the Boughs thereof were like the Goodly Cedars: So that this Plant sent out her Boughs unto the Sea, and her Branches unto the River, [*Psalm*. 80. 9, 10, 11.] Who can but ascribe the wonderful effect to God, when the Planters of this Doctrine had neither first, Learning, 2ly, Nor parts to carry on such a work; 3ly, Neither had they any worldly Interest or Authority?*

Si fuerunt Homines rudes, & imperiti rerum, quorum opera deus est usus in tradendo verbo, si non fuerunt summo loco nati, si nullis humanis instructi praesidiis hanc rem aggressi sunt, profecto oportet doctrinam ab ijs profectam esse planè divinam, saith Camero. Praelect. de verb. dei. p. 455.

And

And for the 2d. (1) The course that they took,
 It was the certain way to ruin themselves and all their hopes in this world : Before they undertook this work, they were told by Christ their Master, that they must be his Martyrs, and bear witness to the Doctrine they were to preach by the Loss of their Credit, Liberty and Lives : And is it likely they would ever venture upon such a design, if they had not good Security, that they should be no losers in the End, and that the Cause they managed was Gods, who would infallibly succeed and reward them ?

And for the 3d. (1) The Doctrine they were to infuse and plant) It was perfectly contrary to the Nature and Inclination of those, that were to receive it ; and would certainly expose them to sufferings in the world, and make them the scorn and reproach of all Unbelievers [which at this time was all the world, except a few inconsiderable Idiots.

The very *First Elements* of this Doctrine, were so cross and displeasing to flesh and Blood (which before this Doctrine was received, ruled all the world,) that without the concurring mighty power of God, It was plainly impossible, that it should be entertained : For Men to deny themselves, and to take up their Cross and follow Christ, and boldly to profess themselves his disciples and glory in his Name, who was so despised and hated of all Men : To renounce the flesh with its Affections and Lusts : To love their enemies, and heartily to seek the wellfare of those that seek their hurt, and rejoyce in their Calamity : To live as strangers and Pilgrims in the world, having their only delight
 and

and treasure above; And to despise the world, and all its glory as it draws away the Heart from God: To prefer reproach and affliction with the people of God, before the pleasures of sin which are but for a season; And to chuse heartily to be a door-keeper in the House of God, and to have the meanest Office in his Service, before the most stately Palaces of vanity and wickedness, and the highest Honour in any other Service: To lay all down at the Feet of his Maker and Redeemer, with the most humble submission, being ready to part with the dearest and nearest Comforts, when the Lord would have it so: In a word, to be wholly at his beck, in an Active and Passive Obedience: These are Doctrins plain and easie to be understood, but hard of digestion, that grate hard upon the Flesh. And yet these were the very *Essentials of Christianity*, which they were to proclaim and command Men in the Name of God with all Authority to receive: And to threaten destruction from the Lord to all Refusers. How unlikely was this Doctrin to take with Flesh and Blood, unless it were accompanied with power from above:

And for the fourth, (viz.) The mighty opposition that it met with, even all the Potentates on Earth, the Kings and great Men, the wise Men and Philosophers, the Statists and Politicians, counted this wisdom of God meer foolishness: And therefore it was the great objection, that the Infidels and Heathens assaulted the Doctrin of Christ with, that none but the rude Multitude became his Disciples and Followers (though afterwards Dionysius the Areopagite, Polycarp, Justin, Irenaus, and learned Origen, quite spoiled the Heathenish Hopes, and
undid

undid this foolish Objection ; For they saw that it was not want of Learning that made them Christians : For *Origen* had so much , that the most learned *Plotinus*, seeing him amongst his Auditors blush'd, and after a few words abruptly brake off his Lecture ;) And you know it was the *Pharisaical* Objection against Christ, Have any of the Rulers believed on him ? But these People that know not the Law, (meaning those that embraced Christs Doctrin) are accused : *John* 7. 48, 49. Yea the *Jews* themselves, whom God had so much obliged to himself, by so many remarkable Favours , were filled with bitter Indignation and Malice, and did fiercely persecute all that entertained this Doctrin, and wanted neither Spight, nor Zeal, nor Opportunity, to crush all that went this way, and to bring heavy sufferings upon them : Moreover [which was the grand Impediment of all to the *Christian Faith*,] there were then such swarms of *Hereticks*, (1.) Such as professed Christianity, but hated it in their hearts, and did their utmost to root it up : And yet it prospered before their Faces, whilst they stood and looked on, gnashing their Teeth, and fretting. That naked, simple, and illiterate Men should prevail against all manner of weapons that were in their hands to ruin and destroy it.

All which laid together is no less than a demonstration of a Divine and Almighty Power in succeeding such an unlikely Work.

Secondly. And as it was at first *planted* by no less than a Divine Power, so the same mighty Assistance was necessary, and therefore observable in its *Propagation* : It was impossible that such a Doctrin should

should spread and subdue the World to its obedience, (as it quickly did) unless infinite wisdom and power had made way, and blessed it : How could it have got so much ground, and have run so swiftly thorough the World, if he that rideth upon a Cherub, and flyeth upon the wings of the wind (*Psal.* 18. 10.) had not carried it? In the space of *Thirty Years*, or thereabouts (as appears by uncontroled History) it spread it self far and near, not only in *Judea*, and all *Asia*, yea thorough the whole *Roman Empire*, but beyond it also ; It founded in the Ears of *Parthians* and *Indians* : It shot it self like Lightning thorough the places where it made its progress, and melted Mens Hearts, whilst their Bodies were untouched. Though it was such an Enemy to the Pride, Pomp and Glory of the World, which it was purposely intended to disparage, that it might make way for a despised ; crucified Christ, to reign in the Earth, yet it soon got into the Courts of Princes, and into the Consistories of Sage and Wise Counsellours, and into the Academies of Learning, and prevailed over all opposing power : yea, the more it was cut and wounded, the more it grew up and shot forth : *Τεμνόμενον θαύμασι, καὶ τῷ Σιδήρῳ ἀνέγανίζεταί*, saith *Nazianz. Orat.*

*Duris ut Ilex tonsa bipennibus
Nigra feraci frondis in Algido
Per damna, per cedes, ab ipso
Ducit opes animamq; ferro.* Hor.

Object.

Object. And though bare Success be no Argument of Truth or a good Cause, because we see that Lyes and Falsehood have succeeded, and perverted very considerable Numbers of Men. Thus *Mahometism* doth prevail over a great part of the World to this day.

Answer. Yet in the Case of the *Christian Religion*, (a Doctrine so contrary to the World) which hath been propagated not by Fire and Sword, but by Argument and Persuasion, by Sufferings and Persecution, here Success is both a demonstration of Truth and of the Power of God: when, like Lightning, as I said before, it shall melt Mens Hearts, and not touch their Bodies with any force. As for the Religion of *Mahomet*, it's no wonder that such a carnal Flesh-pleasing Doctrine, that doth so highly gratifie the Lusts of Men, should so take with them, and quickly spread it self, especially when it had so many Advantages of Power and Policy to diffuse it.

Fire and Sword were the Arguments that *Mahomet* used to support his Cause and to encrease his Followers: But Christ took a quite contrary course and very unlikely to succeed, but that it had the Countenance and Approbation of Him who knew well enough how to prosper it with a mighty success: With which since the Christian Cause hath been so miraculously blessed, it's a Proof beyond exception, that God hath owned it, and consequently the Scriptures that contain this Doctrine, were inspired by God, because they lay claim to such inspiration, and pretend to be the Word of Almighty God: This is more than sufficient to prove in the *General* God's Approbation of the whole Scripture.

But

But yet more *particularly* : Consider how exactly the *Promises* and *Threatnings* of this Word have been fulfilled and made good in all Ages and Successions of the Church : And this will manifest that God hath owned this Doctrin *ex superabundanti* : After his Predictions concerning his own Death and Suffering, and the Manner, together with the Means and Instruments of it were accomplished, and that he was Crucified by his own Country-men, and mocked and spit upon, and numbred amongst Transgressors, his Garments parted, his side pierced, and such like circumstances punctually fulfilled, according as he had foretold; and that he was risen the Third Day, and had shewed himself openly to his Disciples, for their encouragement and the strengthening of their Faith, and that he had ascended to Heaven in their sight; He promised, that he would send the Holy Ghost, and endue them with power from above, to work Miracles, and to speak with Tongues : which Promise was accordingly fulfilled; For on the day of *Pentecost*, when they were assembled at *Jerusalem*, which other Histories, as well as the Sacred, affirm, and none contradict : He promised also his extraordinary Power and Presence with them, and wonderful success; and all came to pass in like manner : He threatneth the hardning of the *Jews*, and the conversion of the *Gentiles*; And were they not accordingly affected? Moreover, he promised Blessing and Peace to the diligent observers of his Statutes : And have not many remarkable Providences made good this Word of Promise? With what joy and inward comfort unutterable have the faithful Servants of Christ triumphed in
their

their very sufferings : Many of the Martyrs that have sealed the Truth of Christ with their very Blood have sung at the Stake, and have professed an inward ravishment of Spirit, I, and that Men of a grave and discreet and no Fanatical credulous Spirit ! Instances might be produced in great number.

Let *Mahomet* now, or any other Religion whatsoever, produce as good Testimony for the Truth of their Religion if they can, as what is here produced, to declare the Approbation, Countenance and Favour of God to this Religion, which Christ taught, and his Followers embraced, and maintained to the death : And although God doth not daily shew forth these confirming Signs and Tokens of Christianity, or that Religion which Christ in the *New Testament* hath taught, both by his Mouth, and Example, yet sometimes he is pleased to give such clear and convincing Testimonies and Tokens of his Approbation, not liable to any exception, that they might be for standing Monuments to others ever after : And such as will not acknowledge them, but either take them for Fables, or ascribe them to Chance or Fortune, and act their wickedness in defiance of such Examples, such Persons God meets with now and then even still, to vindicate the Credit of those former Stories, and to reinforce their Authority.

I could run over the *Decalogue*, which is the sum and substance of the Divine Laws contained in the Scripture, and shew you how God hath remarkably punished the more notable and famous Transgressours of all these Laws, and the contempt

of the Book in which these Laws are contained, and the derision of his Messengers, which he hath ordained, to proclame and expound these Laws ; and to provoke and perswade Men to the hearty observance of them : It would be an endless labour to produce all the Instances that are to be found in credible Authors of this kind.

So much in Confirmation of the *Second Argument*.

Argument III.

3. **T**Hose Writings that contain peremptory Predictions of Future Things purely contingent [which no eye but God's could possibly foresee] and which afterwards fell out punctually as they were foretold, must needs be the Word of God: But the Writings of the *Old and New Testament* contain such Prophecies and Predictions.

Therefore,

The Major Proposition needs no proof:

Si est divinatio, tum sunt dii, was *Cicero's Argument*.

The Minor is this: That there are many Future Events that depend meerly upon the Arbitrary Will of Man, and pure Casualty punctually foretold in the Scripture, and as punctually fulfilled, may be demonstrated by Induction of Instances out of the *Old and New Testament*.

Instance

Instance the First.

IT was foretold to *Abraham*, that he should have an Issue, and that his Posterity out of his own Loyns should be as the Sand of the Sea, when as yet he had no Child, nor was ever like to have ; he and *Sarah* being old and past such hopes, *Rom.* 4. 19. And that he and his Seed should inherit the Land of *Canaan* and the like 400 years before it came to pass: *Gen.* 15. 13, 14, 15. contains the Prophecy: Know for a certain that thy Seed shall be a stranger in a Land that is not theirs 400 years, and shall serve them, and be evil entreated of them; Notwithstanding the Nations which they serve will I judge, and afterwards they shall come out with great Substance. Thus much was foretold 400 years before it came to pass, when no likelihood of the things did yet appear.

And how exactly was this Prophecy fulfilled, by the ruin of the *Egyptians*, and the deliverance of the *Israelites*, even at the very time foretold not only the Book of *Exodus* doth declare, but even the Consent of Heathen Writers, *Porphyr. Lib. 4. Cont. Xnos.* And *Jewish* Histories do put it beyond all doubt, *Josephus* and others. And it is especially to be remarked, that This Prophecy was so notorious and common amongst the *Jews*, from *Abraham's* time down to *Moses*, which is computed to be 300 years, [that is from *Abraham's* Death to *Moses* Birth] and so delivered by Tradition from Fathers to Children, that it was their only Support in the time of their Sojourning amongst the *Egyptians*, and that which

gave courage to *Moses* when he led them thorough the wilderness.

Another Prediction

IS contained in *Gen. 49. ver. 8, 9, 10.* There *Jacob* in his last Testament to his Son *Judah* tells him, Thy Brethren shall praise thee, and the Children of thy Father shall bow down unto thee: The Scepter shall not depart from *Judah*, nor a Law-giver from between his Feet, until *Shiloh* come: This all the *Jews* expound of the Messiah. The *Hebrew* word שִׁבְט The *Septuag.* render Ἀρχον: *Aquila* Συμβολον: *Symmachus* Ἐξουσία: *Onkelos* [the Author of the *Babylonish Targum*] מִשְׁכָּל all which denote the Sovereignty or Highest Power Political.

This was accomplished 2000 years after, at the Coming of Christ. For at that time King *Herod*, a Stranger, put out quite the Line of *Judah* from the Government of *Jury*: when this Prophecy was first spoken. 1. The Sons of *Jacob* were few in Number, and never like to be a distinct Nation of themselves, or to depart out of *Egypt*. 2. And if they should thrive into a Nation, and have a Scepter of their own, yet was it unlikely that *Judah* and his Posterity should ever come to sway the Scepter, for that he had three elder Brothers, *Reuben*, *Simeon*, and *Levi*, who in all likelihood were to be preferred before him. And 3. when *Moses* recorded this Prophecy, which was divers hundred years after *Jacob* had spoken it, it was yet more unlikely: For that *Moses* then present in Government was of the Tribe of *Levi*,
and

and *Joshua*, designed by God to succeed him, was of the Tribe of *Ephraim*: And yet 4. Consider farther, that after him the Judges succeeded, which ruled almost 400 years, and yet no appearance of the Accomplishment of this Prophecy; At length they come to have Kings to rule, but yet *Judah* seems to be forgotten, and *Saul*, a person of the Tribe of *Benjamin*, was chosen, and he endued with divers Children to succeed him: And who would then have thought that this Prophecy would ever have been fulfilled? But the Counsel of the Lord must stand: And therefore when none dreamed of such a thing, A poor Shepherd is chosen out of the Tribe of *Judah*, to be a King, and the Government so established in his Posterity, that it held out for more than 1200 years together, till *Herod's* time, which is more than any one Family in the whole World beside can shew for its Nobility and Continuance in Government.

Another Prophecy

IS Mentioned in the 1 Kings, 13. 1, 2, 3. *And behold there came a Man of God out of Judah, by the command of the Lord unto Bethel, and Jeroboam stood by the Altar to offer Incense: And he cried against the Altar in the Word of the Lord, and said, O Altar! Altar! thus saith the Lord, Behold a Child shall be born of the House of David, Josiah by Name, and upon thee shall he offer the Priests of the High Places, that burn Incense upon thee, and Mens bones shall be burnt on thee. This was more than 300 years before Josiah was born;*

And this was registred presently according to the Manner of those Times; and the Miracles that happened about the Fact: As that the Altar cleft in twain: And that *Jeroboam* stretching forth his hand to apprehend him, had his hand withered, until it was restored by the Man of God's Prayers.

There passed 300 years and *Josiah* was born, and came to reiga in *Judah*, and one day coming to *Bethel*, to overthrow the Altar, and to destroy the Sepulchers of those Idolatrous Priests; lit upon the Tomb where the Man of God was buried, with the Supercription upon it, which he left untouched, as is declared 2 *Kings* 23. 15, 16, 17. Never was there any Nation upon the Earth, that can produce such Prophecies as these: so certain, so particular, so long foretold before the time, and so exactly fulfilled. But the Holy Scriptures are full of these.

The next Prophecy

IS recorded of *Cyrus*, *Esaiah* 44. 28. foretold 200 years before *Cyrus* was born, when there was not the least probability of such a thing: He saith to *Cyrus*, thou art my Shepherd, and he shall perform all my desire; saying also to *Jerusalem*, thou shalt be built, and to the Temple, thy foundation shall be surely laid, all which was punctually fulfilled by *Cyrus*, *Ezra* 1. &c.

And that there might be no possible suspicion of Forgery in this Matter. This Book of *Esaiah* was pronounced openly to the People, as other Prophecies were, and published into many thousand

sand hands before the Captivity of *Babylon* fell out; and then carried also with the People, and dispersed in *Chaldea*, and other parts of the World.

A vast number of these Prophecies may be mustered up in the *Old* and *New Testament*, though the Instances already produced are all out of the *Old Testament*. These Instances, with many other better improved, you may find in *Parsons Resolut.*
Part 2.

Yet, to conclude this Argument, Let it be considered how punctually Christ foretold what should befall himself from his own Countrey-Men, and some of his Disciples; How he should be denied, betrayed, and put to death, yea the death of the Cross, and that he should rise again the third day: That the Holy Ghost should be poured forth on his Disciples at the Day of *Pentecost*; and often told those that discoursed with him the Thoughts of their Hearts, and what they would do, and did exactly predict the Destruction of the *Jews*, their City and Temple, which accordingly fell out. And then let it be considered, what God saith in *41 Esai. 22.* wherein God provoketh the Idols of the *Gentiles* to make proof of their Divinity, saying, *Let them shew unto us, what shall happen; Let them shew the former things, what they be, that we may consider them, and know the latter end of them, or declare us things for to come; shew the things that are to come hereafter, that we may know that ye are Gods:* Intimating that it is a sufficient proof of a Deity, to foreshew what is to come when the thing is merely contingent.

*Other Proofs of the Divine Authority of
Scripture may be drawn*

First, From the Antiquity of these Books; *Josephus* tells us in his Second Book against *Appion*, That their Law-giver (he means *Moses*) was more Antient than all the Law-givers that are mentioned in Antiquity: And that *Lycurgus*, and all those that *Greece* wonders at, are but Novices, and of much later standing, compared unto him: and *St. Austin*, *De Civit. Dei*, l. 18. c. 37. In the days of some of our Prophets, the Gentile Philosophers were not in being; yea, the Seven wise Men of *Greece*; and those Secretists of Nature that were of a higher date, *Anaximander*, *Anaximenes*, and *Anaxagoras*; neither were they so antient as some of our Prophets. They were far more antient than the oldest Historiographers among the *Heathen*, (viz.) *Helanicus*, *Herodotus*, *Pherecydes*, *Thucydides*, *Xenophon*: And albeit the *Gentiles* had some Poets before, as *Orpheus*, *Homer*, *Hesiod*, yet the eldest of these arrived no higher, than the days of King *Solomon*, who was 500 years after *Moses*, the first Pen-Man of the Bible.

Along time after this most of the *Heathen* Gods were unborn, as the *Gentiles* themselves in their Genealogies of them do confess. And as for *Abraham* he was Elder than *Jupiter*, *Nephtune*, and *Plato*; And yet before *Abraham*, do the scriptures contain the History of 2000 years.

The

The oldest Histories extant, beside the Histories of the Bible, are about the *Theban Wars*, and the Funerals of *Troy*, as *Lucretius* intimates in these Verses :

*Cur supra bellum Thebanum & Funera Troia.
Non alias alii quoque res cecinere Poeta.*

But these are of far later Date than the History of the Creation and Flood.

Another Argument may be drawn from the particular Men that wrote them, who were such as in no reason can be suspected of Deceit or Falseness : They were plain, simple, honest Men, and such as had the Approbation of their Enemies, for their innocent Life and Conversation : They were never accused of any Fault, charged with any Crime, except that they taught a Doctrine quite contrary to the Manners and Practices, both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* : And this stirred up their Rage and Malice against them ; and being so provoked, you may be sure they spake the worst they could of them : And if they could have found any thing to alledge against them, you should have heard it again and again : They had Enemies enough that lay at watch to discredit their Testimony, if they had been able ; that so they might have hindred the further growth of that Religion that so much crossed their worldly ends : They could not hope to compass any worldly Interest, or get any temporal Advantage, by such a Course as this ; Nay rather, they were sure to bring all the World about their Ears, and to undo them

themselves thereby : And they expected no less ;
 but were ready to venture their Lives upon the
 Credit of this Word which they proclaimed open-
 ly to the World, and preached boldly to the Fa-
 ces of their Enemies, that threatned them with
 the greatest Cruelties : The Testimony they gave
 to our Saviour's Divinity, and miraculous Acts,
 they stood to, and boldly defended, to the very
 Face of the bloody *Sanedrim*, that murdered
 him, whilst they had spight enough in their hearts,
 and power in their hands to put them to death,
 and gnashed upon them with their Teeth : Had
 they intended by Forgery to advance themselves
 in the World, they would have taken a more
 likely Course, and curried Favour with the great
 Ones of the World, that had it in their power to
 gratifie their desires, and they would have in-
 vented a lye more to their own advantage. It's
 the manner of Impostors and those that love lying,
 to contrive nothing sooner, than that which they
 think will be most grateful to their Hearers.
 True, some of them were Fishermen, and if in-
 deed they had fish'd for themselves, they would
 have baited their Hooks with such things as they
 knew the Fishes lik'd, and not with such things as
 would drive the Fish away : They would have ac-
 commodated their Words to the tickling of their
 Ears, and the satisfying of their Lusts. But they
 knew it was not their own Word which they
 preached, but the Word of God, and therefore
 it must not be falsified for any Mens pleasure :
 And therefore they despised Pleasures, and con-
 temned both the Hatred and Kindness of Men,
 and exposed themselves to the bitterest Sufferings,
 rather

rather than conceal it from the World: What place is here for the least suspicion of untruth? Now in Matter of Fact, as *Grotius* tells us, we ought verily to stand to unsuspected Testimonies: And if as *Ovid* affirms,

——— *Ubi premia Falsi*
Nulla ratam Testis debet habere fidem.

How much more authentick is the Testimony, when it hath no Reward, but the bitterest usage that enraged Malice can bring about?

Another Argument may be taken from the Harmony, Consent, and perpetual unison Agreement of all the Writers of these Sacred Doctrins: The witness of Lyers would vary, and never come up to a perfect unison and Agreement. But now there is one even Thread runs thorough all the Parts of Scripture, not at all divided, or entangled, or rather one and the same Spirit animates the whole, and quickens every the least part thereof: Though to unstudied Men that have not made exact and diligent search into them, there may seem to be some Contradiction, yet Men that have div'd into them, and have made the deepest search, have fairly reconciled all these seeming Repugnancies, and have put to silence all Gain-sayers: and it is no more than all Writings are liable to, though they be never so conform and agreeable to themselves, yet they may seem to clash to an injudicious Reader.

Another

Another Argument may be taken from the Duration and Continuance of these Writings in despite of all that have endeavoured to suppress them: They had certainly perished in the Flames long before now, if God had not walked in the midst of Fire with them. How did the *Jews* on the one hand, and the *Heathen* Emperours on the other, conspire both to root out the Men, and the Doctrin, which they published and taught? You know what General Persecutions there have been at once of all the Christians throughout the World, and how many Thousands have been slaughtered by the *Roman* Emperours Commands. I need not tell you that there were Ten of these General Persecutions, and yet all would not do. *Julian* strictly prohibited all *Christian Schools*, thinking by that Means to root Christianity out of the World: and yet the Success was not answerable to his Malice. *Antiochus Epiphanes* commanded all the Holy Writings should be burnt, as the History of the *Maccabees* will inform you, 1 *Macc.* 1. 59. yet God preserved them. And *Dioclesian*, Author of the *Tenth Persecution*, commanded by Proclamation, the Holy Scriptures to be burnt where ever they were found throughout the *Roman* Empire; as *Euseb.* relates, l. 8. c. 3. If the Scriptures had not been the Word of God, they had never surviv'd so much Malice and the vigilant Endeavours of so many subtil and potent Enemies to destroy them out of the World; nor escap'd the combined furious Attempts both of *Jews* and *Gentiles* to blot them out of the Memory of Mankind.

Moreover,

Moreover, If all that were hitherto produced, were not enough to demonstrate the Divine Authority of Scripture, and to satisfy and confirm the Mind in this weighty Truth, I might add by way of *Accumulation*, other *Proofs* from the Majesty, Purity, and Efficacy of this Word, which so far excels all Humane Writings in these particulars : And also from the Profession of Men and Martyrs, that did and were ready to dye for it ; Men of great Parts and Integrity, that would not have parted with their Lives without a sufficient Cause : As also from the destruction of the Grand Opposers of it : And the Consent of so many Men in all Ages, and those that had the greatest Advantages thoroughly to scan and know the Truth, and the Assent of very Adversaries.

All which do prove *ex super abundanti*, that the *Scriptures* are the most

Sacred Word of God,

and Written by

Divine Inspiration.

To conclude therefore with some little Exhortation, in a Point of such Weight and Moment ; Remember in your Meditations, to strengthen this *Intellectual Grace*, which lies in the Firm and Active Belief of the *Divine Authority of Scripture* ; Get and keep such Clear Evidence and Demonstration of its *Divinity*, that may satisfy your

your Soul, and enforce the most practical Assent : That you may read the Threatnings with Reverence and a suitable Fear, as those that God will certainly make good and execute upon those that fall under them : That you may read the Promises with full perswasion of their Accomplishment to those that have their part and interest in them, and so feel the forcible power of them to quicken you to your Duty : That you may read the Precepts, not as idle Storys, but as the Commands of God : Look that you evidently see the Name of God upon the Doctrin and History thereof, and it will have another Effect, than a bare opinionative or implicit belief, grounded upon the bare word of Man, could produce. Your Assent will be suitable to your Evidence ; and the Effect and Influence it hath upon your Heart and Life, will be suitable to your Assent. It's time well spent, to read over and consider those Treatises that convince the Divine Authority of Scripture. The better the Ground-work is laid, the more firm will the Superstructure be. When once thou art solidly and thoroughly perswaded, that God is the Author of the Scriptures, thou wilt expect a Treasure there, that is not to be found in any Humane Writings, any farther than they contain this Doctrin in them. If you delight in Falshood and Lyes, and love Darknes rather than Light, search not here, nor expect that Scripture should gratifie you : But if thou art a Lover of Truth, a Lover of Wisdom, then come hither, and dig into these Mines, and God that was the Author will open thine Eyes, if thou truly desire to be informed.

Some Considerations to help on the
daily Exercise of Faith in Christ
or Subjection to the Sovereignty
of our Redeemer.

Scriptures that require Faith in Christ, and
shew us its Nature:

1 John 12. *As many as received him to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe on his Name.*

John 3. 16. *God so loved the World, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth on him, should not perish, but have everlasting Life.*

Verse 18. *He that believeth on him is not condemned, but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God.*

Verse 36. *He that believeth on the Son hath Everlasting life, (that is, quo ad jms, or Inchoative) And he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.*

John 5. 40. *Ye will not come unto me, that ye might have life.*

Luke 19. 27. *Those mine Enemies that would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me.*

Heb.

Heb. 5. 9. *And being made perfect, he became the Author of Eternal Life and Salvation to all them that obey him.*

Matth. 11. 28, 29. *Come unto me all ye that are weary and heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my Yoke upon you, and learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart, and ye shall find rest to your souls.*

John 5. 22, 23, 24. *For the Father judgeth no Man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: That all men should honour the Son, as they honour the Father; He that honoureth not the Son, honoureth not the Father which sent him. Verily, verily, I say unto you, he that heareth my Word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting Life, and shall not come into Condemnation, but is passed from Death to Life.*

BEfore I come to the *Motives* that should animate us to the frequent and delightful Exercise of *Faith*, which must be daily kept in the Mind and Thoughts, (or some of the like Nature) it's necessary that we well understand the Nature of that Faith which is of such daily Use and unspeakable Advantage in the whole Christian Life.

For the better and more distinct Understanding whereof, we must take notice, that in the Word of God we are informed of a Twofold Kingdom of God. 1. The First, as Creatour. 2. The Second, as Redeemer; And both these have their different Constitution and Administration. Whilst Man stood in his Integrity, he was under the Laws and Government of his Creatour, and then
Faith

Faith in God as his Creatour and Sovereign, was the Radical and Fundamental Virtue, which whilst it did continue firm and inviolate, he was happy in the Favour of God; and never began to fail in his Obedience, till first his Faith and Heart subjection to God was shaken: But when his Heart began secretly to revolt from God, and to hæsitare about the perfect Veracity, Justice and Goodness of God, and to believe the Tempter before him, (who is *'Auſems* &c) then he began to transgress and violate his Command.

And having made Shipwreck of Faith and a good Conscience towards God his Sovereign, that Law or Covenant which he had broken, threatens him with Eternal Death: But God being moved with pity towards lapsed Mankind, did not execute the deserved Penalty; but contrived a way in his Infinite Wisdom, in which he might shew Mercy to his miserable Creature Man, upon honourable Terms, and vindicate the Honour of his Law, and the Authority of the Law-giver, and make Transgression as odious, as if the whole Species of Mankind had suffered, the Penalty of the Law: And that was by the Incarnation of God the Son, taking our Flesh upon him, and uniting it to his Godhead, and so both Humane and Divine Nature being united in one Person, he might by the one be made capable of suffering, and by the other, of satisfying, offended Justice. Thus God the Son, and our dearest Saviour, undertook the Work, liv'd in an exact Conformity to the Law, fulfill'd all Righteousness, and suffered what was due for our Transgressions, and having finished the Work, God the Father was

so well pleased therewith, that he alters the state of things, and commits all into the hands of his Son, and now the Second Kingdom commenceth, which is the *Kingdom of God as Redeemer*, as the other was of *God as Creator*.

And here the Constitution and Government is quite different from the former: The former required Faith in God, and Perfect Obedience, upon the Penalty of Eternal Death, if there was the least Violation.

The latter requireth Repentance and Faith in Christ as Sovereign Redeemer, and sincere Obedience, continued to the End, or else threatneth a heavier Condemnation than the former: Here Faith in God the Redeemer constitutes us Subjects of this Second Kingdom, which is nothing else but Heart-Subjection to our Sovereign Redeemer, as Faith in God was our Heart-Subjection to our Sovereign Creatour; or else the deliberate Consent of the Soul to come under the Yoke and Government of Christ. So that the Faith which puts the Christian into a Justified State is a Political Act, such a one as he performs to a Prince that first consents to be his Subject; (I.) to do the Duties of a Subject, if he may but enjoy the Priviledges and Immunities of such a Subject. So that Faith is no one Physical Act of the Understanding or Will, but is made up of divers Acts of both.

It supposeth our knowledge of God the Second Person in the Trinity, suffering and satisfying in our Nature, and God's acceptance, and a full pardon granted to all that repenting them of their Sin and Rebellion against God their Creatour, consent heartily

heartily to come under the Sovereignty of God Redeemer, and to obey him in sincerity all the days of their Life ; It supposeth that we believe thusmuch, and that he is able to subdue our Corruptions, and to bring us into favour with God again, and thereupon give ear, hearty consent, resigning up our selves in a deliberate Covenant unto him: This is the Faith which in the Gospel is said to justify. By which description of Faith, you may see that Faith *Negatively* is not

1. A Perswasion, that we are justified ; for that would infer that a Man is justified, before he is justified, which Doctrin is so notoriously absurd, that now I think Few or None own it : You may see it solidly confuted by several Arguments in Mr. *Baxter's* Answer to Serjeant *Shephard*.

2. Nor is it a bare Belief that Christ died for Sinners, and hath satisfied the Divine Justice. The Devil may have such a Faith as this.

3. Nor is it an Affiance to Recumbency upon Christ for pardon : The middlemost is an Act antecedent to justifying Faith, and the other Two are consequent upon it, though not immediately it may be ; at least the first: For that sometimes comes a longtime after, when the Believer is grown up to a state of strength and stability in his Faith, and sometimes it never follows at all in many weak Believers. But *Positively* it is

The weary Sinner's acceptance of Christ, as his Sovereign, to Rule, Sanctifie, and Save him, and the Souls deliberate subjecting it self to him as his most endeared Lord and Governour, the absolute Priest and Prophet, and one every way able to

save those that are his true Subjects and Disciples: This is the Universal, Radical and Fundamental Grace of the Gospel, that diffuseth its Virtue into all parts of the Christian Life, and its weakness or strength will be seen and felt in all our Christian Duties.

For the deeper radification and confirmation of this Grace therefore, it's necessary that we keep those Reasons continually upon our Minds, that are apt to produce or strengthen it, and frequently ponder them with our most serious Thoughts, that they may put us upon the Practice and Exercise of this universal Grace, till it grow up to the highest Perfection we are able. Those that I shall suggest are such as these :

1. *First*, You will never prize nor exercise that Life of Faith, till you have well considered the Miseries of an Unbeliever. It's impossible now to conceive, much more to express, their intolerable greatness; None can thoroughly understand what they are, but those that feel them: Wo to the Person that comes thus to understand them! But such assuredly will all those be that die in unbelief.

Let me make a *Brief Enumeration* of the Particulars.

1. *First*, They continue in flat Rebellion against God, and how such are like to speed, I leave you to judge: We are all born with a rebellious Nature against God, and practice nothing but Enmity and Contradiction to him, till this Nature be changed: shall God proclaim Pardon, Mercy, and Grace, to Conquer the Violence of Corruption and Temptation, to those that will lay down their

their Weapons of Rebellion, and give over their stubborn opposition against God, and come under the Command and Government of his Son? And shall you and I reject such a gracious Offer, and say with those Rebels, *We will not have this Man to reign over us: (i. e.)* We will not believe in him, *Luke 19. 14.* Nay hath Christ done so much to endear his Person and Government to us, treading the Wine-Press of his Father's wrath for us, *Isa. 63. 3.* shedding his warmest Blood to purchase our Peace with God? And shall we refuse to submit our selves to him? Is it he, or we, that are the gainers? Should he glory in such poor contemptible Subjects, or we in such an Almighty Sovereign and Saviour? We mistake infinitely, and apprehend not the Matter aright, if we do not take it for a high Priviledge and Favour, to be under the Conduct of such a one that hath unsearchable Wisdom to Rule us, infinite Power both to protect us, and break our Enemies in pieces, and is not profited by our Service, *Job 22. 2.* Can a Man be profitable to God, as he that is wise may be profitable to himself? Thou owest thy hearty Subjection unto God, He made thee, and is thy rightful and absolute Sovereign, and when thou hadst turn'd Traitor to him, He hath not set thee up as a Monument of his terrible Wrath and Vengeance: But hath laid the Government upon his Son, so nearly allied to us, by the Assumption of our Nature, and relaxed the Rigour of his Law; promising to accept sincere Service and Love, though perfect Obedience be due: O what an Aggravation will this be of our Sin, if we still continue it after the Grace of God

hath so much abounded towards us, *Rom. 6. 1.* and persist in our Rebellion: we know too well what it is to be Rebels against God our Redeemer; but we little imagin what it is to be sentenced and condemned for Rebels at the great and terrible Day.

2. *Secondly*, Every Unbeliever hath the Guilt of all his former Sins fast bound upon him: not one of them is pardoned; every Commission, yea and every Omission, every idle Thought, and Word and Action, with all their several Aggravations, stand still upon Record uncancell'd; God hath pass'd an Act of Indempnity and Oblivion, and proclaimed wonderful Grace and Mercy to penitent Sinners; but the Unbeliever, whilst such, hath no share nor portion in it. The Blood of Christ hath infinite virtue to cleanse sinners from all unrighteousness, *1 John 1. 9.* but it's only such as do believe: The Law of God the Creatour, or Covenant of Works, which threatneth Death to every Sin, is still in Force to such as are not the sincere Subjects of Christ by Faith: the wrath of God abideth upon such. *John 3. 36. He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son, shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.* Every violation of the Law makes it due to the sinner, and Faith in Christ is the only means to remove it; but where that is wanting, there it continues and abides. If one sin unpardoned, will sink the Soul of the transgressor into everlasting condemnation, into what unspeakable misery and horror will that vast Number that he hath committed force the sinner, who will not come unto Christ, nor submit himself

to his Redeemer? Look to thy self, and answer it as thou canst, that wilt not come unto Christ to be thy Advocate and answer for thee: stand upon thy own Legs as well as thou art able, that wilt not bottom thy self by Faith on Christ: endure the storm of God's wrath as well as thou canst, that wilt not anchor thy Soul upon the Redeemer of the World. Thou seest the worst of it, if thou canst make light of it, it's but bearing all the Sins thou hast committed upon thy own Body and Soul, and the Wrath of God due to them; And if thou takest this to be a tolerable and a light Burden, continue still in thy unbelief.

3. *Thirdly*, If thou art no true Subject of Christ by Faith in him, thou art a Slave of Satan, and a Vassal to thine own Corruption: There are but two principal Masters; Christ is one, whose Right it is; And Satan is the other, though an Usurper; If thou wilt not devote thy self to him, who is thy lawful Lord and Master, thou wilt be under the Commands of a Cruel Tyrant. There are but two Generals, Christ the Captain of our Salvation, *Heb. 2. 10.* and Satan the Ring-leader to destruction; and one thou must fight under. There are but two sorts of Servants; either thou art the Servant of Righteousness, or else thou art the Servant of Sin, *Rom. 6. 16.* If Christ do not dwell in thy Heart by Faith, *Ephes. 3. 17.* Satan hath got possession, and thou art a Member of that wicked Spirit. τὸ ἐμπνεῦμα ἐν τοῖς υἱοῖς τοῦ Ἀπειθείας, (N) that efficaciously worketh in the Children of Disobedience, *Ephes. 2. 2.* He formeth thy Conceptions, frameth thy Dis-

courses, animateth all thy Actions, steereth thy whole Conversation, and when there is need, instigateth thee to any Wickedness: though thou art secure and little suspectest, 'tis he that prompteth thee in all thou goest about. If thou hadst an eye to see what influence he hath upon all thy Actions, it would make thee to abhor all thou doest. Indeed there are wicked Habits and Dispositions that strongly move and hurry thee into the same wickedness which the Devil would have thee to commit; for if thou wert meerly passive, it would be thy Misery, but not thy Sin: But now having no part in Christ, thou art at once led by thy own Corruption, and the Enemy of all Goodness, into all Sin and Mischief. No *Turkish* slavery comparable to this, wherein the sinner is wounding and tearing, and wracking himself every day, and yet though he feels the smart, sometime perceives the mischief he doth himself, he cannot, nor will forbear. You would look with pity upon a Madman, gnashing and cutting himself, and bless God that you are sober, when you see the pernicious Effects of Madness: And yet if you are impenitent unbelievers, you are guilty of far worse Cruelty to your Souls.

4. *Fourthly*, If thou art a Unbeliever, thou art not sure to be one Day longer out of Hell, and Eternal Misery: thou hangst over the Pit of Destruction, by the single Thread of thy Life; and if the Twine break, (as it is a Miracle it doth not every hour) all the World cannot save thee: Let not a deceived Heart turn thee aside, that thou canst not by Faith in Christ deliver thy own Soul, nor say, is there not a Lye in my Right Hand?

Hand? *Esa.* 44. 2. Thy Riches and thy Honours cannot prevent thy Death, much less can they procure a Release from it, least of all can they Ransom thee from Destruction; thou art hasting to it every Moment, and thou knowest not what one Day or Hour may bring forth, *Prov.* 27. 1. As sure as thou livest, so surely thou shalt dye for ever, (if thou go forward in unbelief) when once thy Breath is departed from thy Body, and how many ways that may be stop'd, who knows? And wilt thou yet stand out against the gracious Offers of thy Redeemer, and linger in Infidelity, and run the hazard of Eternal Destruction? Nay, its no hazard, but as undoubtedly certain, as the Word of God is true. O that unbelievers would ponder this, that they would but consider their latter End, what a few Breaths more they have to fetch before they are turned into Everlasting Despair: How dare you lye down to sleep, lest you should awake in Hell? How dare you rise, lest it should be to Judgment and Condemnation? How can you enjoy your Life one Moment, that know not but that the next Moment you must exchange it for Endless Torment and Misery; And how will you do to give up the Ghost, that have not given up your Names to Christ? Your foolish Friends may flatter you, and your own fraudulent Heart may cheat you, but the Word of God tells you plainly what will be your doom, if by Faith in Christ you do not escape it: How can you do to read such a Text as that in *Luke* 12. 20. *Ἀποθνήσκει τὸ σῶμα τὸν ἄνθρωπον οὐκ ἀποθνήσκει ὁ Θεός*: This Night shall they require thy Soul of thee; (1) (by a usual *Hebraism*) shall thy Soul be required of thee;

thee ; for when there is no *Nominative Case* go before the *Verb*, it's taken impersonally.

5. *Lastly*, God is thine Enemy ; and that contains all the Misery that can be thought or spoken : Who can do a worse turn to himself, than to make God his Enemy ? Who can befriend that Man that hath God for his Adversary, or plead his Cause for him ? When *Saul* in distress comes to *Samuel* (as he thought) for counsel, what a sad Answer doth he return him ? Wherefore dost thou ask of me, seeing the Lord is departed from thee, and is become thine Enemy ? 1 *Sam.* 28. 16. And it was the bitterest part of *Job's* suffering, that he thought God was his Enemy. Wherefore hidest thou thy Face, and countest me for thine Enemy ? *Job* 13. 24. Thou, even thou art greatly to be feared, and who may stand in thy sight when once thou art angry ? saith the Psalmist, *Psalms* 76. 7. We may bear the Frowns of a Mortal Man, though he were never so great, yea, though all the World should frown, there's some Refuge against that : If all Men and Devils should storm and rage against us, it's possible for a Soul to comfort it self against this, and find out a shelter. But whither wilt thou fly when God pursues ? What will you do in the day of visitation, and in the desolation which shall come from far ? To whom will you fly for help ? saith the Prophet to the wicked *Israelites* that had provoked God to be their Enemy, *Isaiah* 10. 3. There's no flying from him : Whither shall I go from thy Spirit ? Or whither shall I flee from thy Presence ? If I ascend up into Heaven, thou art there ; If I make my Bed in Hell, behold thou art there ; If I take
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the wings of the Morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shall thy hand lead me, &c. *Psal.* 130. 7, 8, 9, 10. There's no escap'ing his hand; If he come to tare in pieces, there can be none to deliver, *Psalms* 50. 22.

Stay a little, thou that art an impenitent unbeliever, and consider a while what this importeth, (*viz.*) To have God for thine Adversary.

I'll tell thee in brief, It implies these *three Things*.

1. *First*, All the Attributes of God are against thee; and feel it thou shalt, either sooner or later.

2. *Secondly*, All the Creatures will set against thee first or last.

3. *Thirdly*, Thine own Conscience shall side with God against thee, and to make thee perfectly miserable, shall fall upon thee with the greatest Fury and Madness.

1. If thou reject the gracious Offers of Mercy by the Gospel, and refuse to have Christ reign over thee, all the Attributes of God are engaged against thee. The inflexible Justice, and Wisdom, and Holiness, his infinite Power, and never failing Truth and Veracity, will all combine to make thee everlastingly miserable. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do righteously? *Gen.* 18. 25. Will Infinite Power let such Contempt of his Grace (which hath stooped so low) go unrevenge'd? Will he suffer the proud Sinner to Spit in the Face of his Son (for unbelief and rejecting him is no better) and not wipe off that aspersion, by the eternal ruin and perdition of the sinner? Will it consist with the perfect Wisdom of God, to
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look down upon the unbeliever, and see him trample such amazing Love and Mercy under his feet, not once nor twice, but so many Years together, as make up the Number of his Life, and not recompence such base Ingratitude and wicked Presumption, according to its desert? If there be Truth and Faithfulness in God, thou canst not scape: He cannot deny himself, *2 Tim. 2. 13.* Dost thou believe it? If thou believest not, yet he abideth faithful; and let me tell thee again, *Ἀρρῆστεθαὶ αὐτὸν οὐ δύναται*, he cannot deny himself: He hath spoken, and will not alter the thing that is gone out of his Mouth. He that believeth not the Son, shall not see Life, *John 3. 36.* Nay, he that believeth not, is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the Name of the only begotten Son of God, *John 3. 18.* I know he delighteth not in the misery or ruin of any of his Creatures, and therefore is slow to Anger, and proceeds leasurely to Judgment, and strikes not till there is no Remedy, after he hath used all the Methods of Mercy and Pity to reclaim the sinner, and hath invited him time after time, year after year, to have compassion upon his own Soul, and accept of Christ and pardon with him; yet when no Means will succeed, and the case of the sinner is quite desperate, neither will he be drawn to believe, however he speed; Judge now what a disparagement this would be to the Wisdom, Justice, Holiness, and Veracity of God, not to pass Sentence upon such a sinner: and then what a one it must be, you may easily understand: If they that despised *Moses Law*, died without Mercy, of how much forer punishment shall he be thought worthy,

worthy, who hath troden under foot the Son of God, &c. *Heb.* 10. 28, 29. &c. If God strike, he hath a hand like himself.

2. *Secondly*, All Creatures will set against thee, for they are his Armies, and he is the *קֹדֶשׁ זְרָאִי*, the Lord of Hosts: All thy Friends and Acquaintance will come in and bring their Witness and Accusations against thee, even thy bosom Confederates shall cry shame on thee, and add Affliction to thy Misery; O what a killing Consideration will it be then (and I would it were so now, if possibly it might prevent that woful day) to be overwhelmed with Misery and Desperation, and when thou shalt cry out with *Job*, *Job* 19. 21. Have pity upon me, have pity upon me, O my Friends, for the hand of God hath touched me, and he shall find none near him, to speak one word of ease to him, but all his bitter Enemies; This will cut him to the quick, and bring down his stomach, when it is too late: Then, if it were possible to believe in hope, how earnestly would he wish to see one of the days of the Son of Man, *Luke* 17. 22.

3. *Thirdly*, To compleat his Misery, his own Conscience shall fall upon him, with the greatest violence: It will upbraid him with wilful stupid unbelief, and the most monstrous ingratitude; It will bring to his remembrance, the kindness of his Saviour, such a one as was never heard of; It will tell him of his Blood and Sufferings, and how fain he would have washed him, and embraced him with Mercy, and he flew away, and scorn'd Deliverance, and slighted all the Proffers of his Love: Oh with what an aking Heart will the Infidel then say,

say, Why did he dye for me, since I was resolved to dye for my self; If he had not died for me, this Death had never been so terrible, as now I feel it: O that any one would bring an Argument, and convince me now, that Christ died not for me! then should I escape the greatest part of my Torment. I would not torment thee with such thoughts as these now, if it were not in hope to prevent such tormenting thoughts, when time is past: Let me earnestly entreat thee, whoever thou art, that art in this doleful condition, either speedily to believe in Christ, or believe it, thine own Conscience will one day prove thy most terrible Executioner.

So much for the *First Motive*, that should Teach us to prize and exercise Faith, (*viz.*) Consider the Miseries of an Unbeliever.

But it is not my design to fright the Sinner unto Christ, neither is it possible that Fear only should work true Belief, and produce a justifying Faith. All that I have said hitherto, is to deter the Sinner from such a damning Sin as Unbelief, but these be Arguments of another Nature to attract the Sinner unto Christ; Consider therefore,

2. *Secondly*, What Christ hath done to draw the Heart of Sinners to him, and to engage them to believe. He hath given his Soul an Offering to the death, and stood in the very flames of his Father's wrath, that he might keep away the burning intolerable heat thereof from us, and bore the grievous burden of our sins; He stript himself even to the greatest Poverty and Nakedness, that he might Cloth us; and emptied himself, that

we might be filled, *2 Cor. 8. 9.* Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that tho he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich. When we were fallen into the deepest reproach and shame; he made himself of no Reputation, and took upon him the Form of a Servant, that he might advance us to the highest dignity and honour, *2 Phill. 6. 7.* He humbled himself to the death, that he might procure our life, he made a low stoop, that he might lift us up when sin had cast us down; He took upon him the humane Nature, that he might make us partakers of the Divine Nature, *Heb. 2. 14.* compared with *2 Pet. 1. 4.* Forasmuch as the Children are partakers of Flesh and Blood, he also himself likewise took part with them, that through Death he might destroy him that had the power of Death, that is the Devil, and purchase for us exceeding rich and precious Promises, that by them we might be made partakers of the Divine Nature; It was no small Endearment of himself to us to pass by the Angels and put forth his hand to help us: For verily he took not upon him the Nature of Angels, but the Seed of *Abraham*, *2 Heb. 16.* He rejoiced in the habitable parts of the Earth, and his delight was among the Children of Men, *Prov. 8. 3.* It's his earnest desire that thou shouldst have the benefits of his Death, and enjoy what he hath so dearly purchased, and therefore he invites thee to believe in him, because otherwise thou canst have no advantage by his Death; If thou hast any understanding or ingenuity, lay the Love of Christ to Heart, and consider how unspeakably great it is; it's past words

words to express it, it is so much beyond example ; let thy thoughts dwell upon it, and never give over the serious consideration of his Sufferings and Death for such as thou art , till thy Heart melt and yield, and till thou canst with Love and Thankfulness, resign thy self to him, as one that doth deliberately resolve to be his Loyal Subject and Disciple : Methinks , after thou hast heard what he hath done for thee , thou shouldst be ready to do any thing, and stick at nothing that he bids thee do , that thou mightst shew the most grateful resentment of his love ; But when he commands thee nothing, but for thy greatest advantage , that is to leave thy deadly Enemies, and forsake thy self-destroying Courses, and come unto him thy greatest Friend, and live under his Government , to refuse such a gracious Offer , shews that thou art void of all true understanding, ingenuity, and sense of thy own Benefit and Advantage : Hadst thou rather live under the cruel Laws of a deadly, malicious Enemy , and one that neither can nor will protect thee, when the most dreadful storms are coming on thee , Than under the Government of one that beareth the greatest love and compassion to thee , and hath the greatest Wisdom to direct thee , the greatest Power to protect thee, and whose Laws are the most perfect Rule of Life, and the greatest Tendency to the Peace, Welfare and Perfection of Christ's loyal, faithful Subjects ? Hadst thou rather serve a Tyrant, and professed Enemy, in Chains and Slavery , than a rightful, just and gracious Sovereign, that hath given such Demonstrations of the most wonderful and stupendious love

love to such as thou art, whose Service is perfect Freedom, who hath contrived all his Laws for the benefit of his true Subjects and sincere Disciples? If the Love of Christ, testified by such exquisite Sufferings and Death, and thy own Welfare and Felicity, will not prevail with thee, to throw off the Yoke of Satan, and the World and Flesh, and to become a Believer, and cause thee to say from thy Heart, with those in the Prophet *Isaiah* 26. 13. *O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had Dominion over us, but by thee only will we make mention of thy Name.*

3. *Thirdly*, Remember that Faith is the first Grace that brings thee into a justified state Condition: All that thou hast or canst do, before thou dost believe in Christ, is of no avail to thy Justification and Salvation: It's Faith that unites the Soul to Christ, and till it be united to him, it can receive no saving benefit from him: when first the sinner doth heartily consent that, Christ shall be his King and Teacher, and he will be his Subject and Disciple, he is morally joyned and united unto Christ; as the Sovereign and Subject make one Body Politick, (of which every Subject is a Member, and the King is the Head) and as the Master and the Scholars are morally united; then begins our union with Christ and our participation of the benefits which he hath purchased, when we first enter our selves into his School, and list our selves under his Government and Protection: God hath peremptorily resolved, that none shall have the special Benefits of his Death, but those that submit themselves to him. Amongst

which Justification is the first, and then the rest follow in their due place and order: Being justified by Faith, we have Peace with God, Rom. 8. 1. He will be a Saviour to none, but such as accept him as their Lord; And as he will not become the Author of Eternal Salvation to any, but those that actually obey him; so neither will he become the Means of their Justification, to any but such, as by Faith and Cordial Subjection resolve to obey him when their obedience is required: so that the subjection of the Heart to Christ, and a deliberate purpose to serve him sincerely and constantly all our days, is the first Foundation of our Union with Christ and special Relation to him, from whence Justification doth immediately flow. And what a Mercy and Privilege that is, none but such as reap the Fruit of Justification perfectly in the other life, can thoroughly tell: *Blessed is he whose Transgression is forgiven, and whose Sin is covered; yea, again, Blessed is the Man, saith David, unto whom the Lord imputeth not Iniquity, and in whose Spirit there is no Guile*, Psal. 32. 1, 2. But as the Man is miserable and wretched for the present, that is not justified, so wo to him, if he die in an unjustified state. And this, if he want true Faith, he will certainly do: Justification is the Act of the Supreme Rector; none hath Authority to do it, but he only, and none can effectually remit or renounce the Penalty, but he only, who alone is both the Kingdom and the Power; And this we have the Testimony of his certain and infallible Word, that he will not do, but upon the Condition of Faith, and an unfeigned subjection to his Son; which alone is the effectual Means

Means to bring them off from their Sins, and to reduce them to their Obedience to God: Never hope to be justified, till from the sense of your vile Nature and corrupt Inclinations and proneness to rebel against God, and obnoxiousness to his just displeasure, you do thankfully fly to Christ as your only Remedy, and take his Person for your Ruler, and his Laws and Example for your Rule, and his Spirit for your Sanctifier: For these are the only Terms on which a Sinner is made a true Member of Christ's Church, and consequently justified and pardoned.

4. *Fourthly*, There's no way whereby we can bring more honour to our Redeemer, than by Believing: For hereby we give him the Glory.

1. Of his Love and Mercy, and all the ways whereby he hath demonstrated his Bowels and Compassions towards us, in his wonderful Condescension, to be made like to us in the Assumption of our Nature, in subjecting himself to the Law, yea, and to the Miseries of his Life, Poverty, Reproach, and Shame, and that in such a degree, as never any one of us endured, or could endure, in suffering the most pitiful Usage, the most sarcastical Taunts, the most bitter Agonies, and the most ignominious cursed Death, and all to bring us into a salveable condition, if we will believe; Now as there can be no greater Affront nor Provocation given to him, than to slight and make void his Grace and Mercy, so unspeakably great, so we can do him no greater honour, than to close with it, and accept it, and be saved by it, and so stand as the Eternal Monument of his Love.

2. We hereby give him also the Glory of his Sovereignty, that by his own Merit and Conquests, as well as the Free Donation of God, is advanced to the right hand of God, and hath the Supreme Sovereignty and Lordship over all things, both in Heaven and Earth: And therefore he tells us, *Matth.* 28. 18. All Power is given unto me in Heaven and Earth. And *Paul* tells us, that to this End Christ both died, and rose again, and revived, that he might be Lord both of Dead and Living, *Rom.* 14. 9. And *Phil.* 2. 8, 9, 10. Because Christ was obedient even to the Death of the Cross, Therefore God hath highly exalted him, and given him a Name, which is above every Name, That at the Name of Jesus every Knee should bow of things in Heaven, and things in Earth, and things under the Earth, *Matth.* 11. 27. All things are delivered to me of my Father: and so *Luke* 10. 22. Now to believe on him, is practically to acknowledge his Sovereignty, that he is Lord of all, *Acts* 10. 36. That he is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God, Angels, and Authorities and Powers being made subject to him, 1 *Pet.* 3. 22. When we subject our selves to him, by Faith we own him, whom God hath made a little lower than the Angels, and crowned him with Glory and Honour, and did set him over the Works of his hands, and hath put all things in subjection under his feet, 2 *Heb.* 7. 8, 9. Did we know what a Blessing and Priviledge it is to come under his Protection, and live in subjection to him, we should need no other Argument to perswade us to believe: As we honour him, so we ease our selves,
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and rid our selves of those Fears, that we are otherwise exposed to, and therefore our Saviour, that he might comfort his Disciples, exhorts them, *John 14. 1.* Let not your Hearts be troubled, ye believe in God, believe also in me: When we believe, we do in effect say, He hath satisfied the Justice of God, and he hath given Sinners into his hands, and laid the Government upon his shoulders, and that he can save to the utmost, all that come unto God by and through him, since he ever liveth as an immutable and everlasting Priest, to make intercession for them, *Heb. 7. 25.*

3. Hereby we give him also the Glory of his Skill; when by Faith we bring our diseased Souls to him, with confidence of a Cure: For that is one of the Chief Ends of Faith, that we may be purified from all our Corruptions, and perfect Holiness in the Fear of God, *2 Cor. 7. 1.* As it was one of Christ's great Ends in dying, so it should be ours in believing, that we might be saved from our sins, *Matth. 1. 21.* It must be a skilful Physitian indeed, that knows how to free the Soul of Man from such a Mass of Corruption, from such a Chronical and Inveterate Disease that's made up of such a complication of Distempers, It must be no less than a Divine Skill indeed, that must raise such an Earthly Mind, that must Cure a Heart so full of Contradiction to the Will of God, and that must tame the Affections to God that are grown so carnal; It must be one that knows all the windings and turnings of the Heart; and is thoroughly acquainted with its Pulse, and all its secret Motions, that can Cure

its Selfishness, and take it off from its inordinate pursuit of Earthly Things, and make it submissive to the Will of God; that can dispel the darkness of Mans Mind, and heal the Confusion of his Thoughts, and awaken him to an impartial Consideration of Things, and fortifie Reason against the Flesh, and rectifie his Judgment, both as to present and future things, and recover him out of Delirancy and Madness: O how much do holy Souls admire his skill whom he hath perfectly recovered! and how much will they that are now languishing in Selfishness and Pride, and the doting Love of this World, and under all that Litter of Corruptions wherewith their Souls are daily disquieted; when he shall have restored them to Integrity again, and to their right Mind! Come unto him by Faith, and you need not doubt, be your sickness never so mortal; you honour him exceedingly, when you see your manifold and deadly Distempers, and cast your selves upon his Skill.

5. *Fifthly*, By Faith thou art made Partaker of all the Benefits of Christ's Incarnation, Life, and Death: Those that were thine but conditionally before, are now made absolutely thine: If thou art heartily Christ's Subject, thou shalt have thy share in all the Priviledges and Immunities of his most wise, powerful, and happy Government, and find that his Yoke is most desirable, *Matth.* 11. 28. 29. If thou doest consent deliberately, and sincerely, to be his Disciple, thou shalt have the unspeakable Advantages of such a skilful and effectual Teacher; (And what Tongue is able to express how many and great they are?) If thou
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art heartily willing to be his Patient, he can and will cure all thy Maladies and Distempers in his due time, and restore thy Soul to its Primitive health and soundness again; he will enlighten thy Mind, and purifie thy Heart, and bend thy Will to a chearful Compliance with the Will of God, and put such a Rellish into thy Soul of Divine and Heavenly Things, that shall make thee long after God, and the Wisdom, Grace and Holiness, that make thee like to him : And then it will be no hard matter to have thy Heart in Heaven, thy Discourse of Heavenly Things, and thy Delight in Heavenly Company: Then the Biass of thy Soul will constantly encline thee to rejoyce in the Lord and live continually in his love and praise, and in the love of all Men, specially the Servants of God and the Heirs of Glory: When thou hast once sworn Fealty to Christ, with thy Heart, (For every baptized Christian doth it with his Mouth, or by the Mouth of his Parents) and art gotten under his Shelter and Protection, The Lord shall be thy Keeper, the Lord shall be thy Shade upon thy Right Hand; The Sun shall not smite thee by Day, nor the Moon by Night; The Lord shall preserve thee from all Evil, he shall preserve thy soul, *Psal.* 121. 6, 7, 8. Thou shalt not be affraid for the terrour by Night, nor for the Arrow that flyeth by Day, *Psal.* 91. 6. Then shall he fill thy Mouth with laughter, and thy Lips with rejoycing, *Job* 8. 21. Mistake me not, as if I intimated, that every true Believer hath actually this Joy and Peace, but he hath the Foundation of it, and he would rejoyce if he saw this Grace in himself : But it is the Malice of Satan

to keep some sincere Christians in the dark, and to keep them from discerning their interest in Christ and the grace of God in them, that he might defraud them of their Comfort, and keep them continually under Trouble: But though he take away their Comfort from them, yet he shall not take away God's Favour from them. They shall still be kept by his mighty Power through Faith unto Salvation, *1 Pet. 1. 5.* All the Benefits that are necessary to Salvation, they shall actually have, and the rest as they are fit for them.

6. *And lastly,* Be their Portion here what it will, they shall have the Blessing of God with it; Which will make all things to work together for Good to them, *Rom. 8. 28.* He shall be like the Tree planted by the Rivers of Water, which bringeth forth his Fruit in due season, his Leaf also shall not wither, and look whatsoever he doth, it shall prosper, *Psalms 1. 3.* Blessed shall be thy Basket, and thy Store, *Deut. 28. 5.* God shall bless thy Poverty, and thy Riches; Thy more plentiful, or more mean Estate; Whether thou have Health or Sickness, it shall turn to thy Advantage in the End. Thy Friends shall be a Blessing to thee, yea, and so shall thine Enemies be also: As there is a secret blast of God's displeasure upon the wicked and all that he hath, so the breath and inspiration of the Almighty teacheth Believers wisdom how to order all their steps. The steps of a good Man are ordered by the Lord, and he delighteth in his way: Though he fall, yet shall he not be utterly cast down, for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand, *Pf. 37. 23.* When the Curse of the Lord is in the House of the wicked, he will be sure to bless the Habitation of Believers, *Prov. 3.* Con-

Considerations to provoke and stir up the *Superlative Love* of God in the Heart.

John 14. 15. *If ye love me, keep my Commandments.*

Psal. 91. 41. *Because he hath set his love upon me, therefore will I deliver him, I will set him on high, because he hath known my Name.*

Prov. 8. 17. *I love them that love me, and those that seek me early, shall find me.*

Matth. 22. 37. *Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind: This is the first and greatest Commandment. And Dent. 6. 5. and Luke 10. 27. to the same purpose.*

Matth. 10. 37. *He that loveth Father or Mother, more than me, is not worthy of me. And Luke 14. 26.*

1 John 4. 8. *He that loveth not, knoweth not God, for God is Love. And Verse 16. God is Love, and he that dwelleth in Love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.*

Psal. 31. 23. *O love the Lord all ye his Saints.*

Psal. 145. 20. *The Lord preserveth them that love him.*

Rom. 8. 28. *All things shall work together for good, to them that love God.*

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Rom. 10. 13. *Love is the fulfilling of the Law.*

1 Cor. 2. 9. *Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entered into the Heart of Man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.*

Gal. 5. 22. *The Fruit of the Spirit, is Love, Joy, and Peace.*

AS there is no surer proof of a Child of God, than the predominant Love of him, because Love is the principal and commanding Affection, which includes and governs all the rest, and the whole life, with a subserviency to the Object to which it is mainly devoted, so there is no better Exercise, than for a rational Creature to study seriously, and to give diligence to thrive in this Grace.

To which blessed end, it is wisdom to treasure up Matter, which either Reason or Faith can suggest out of the Word or Providences of God in the Heart, and to digest and draw it forth by daily Meditation, whereby this sovereign Affection may be fed and excited. Some help hereto, the few following Considerations will administer, if they be impartially weighed, by a Heart, fully at leisure, and not immersed in worldly Affairs, nor entangled with any other impertinent Matters: The which every soul may amplify as it is able, and to which many more may be super-added.

First, There is nothing more highly congruous, nor doth better become a Creature, that hath reason and understanding, than to love God above all, and daily to grow in this Grace.

Secondly,

Secondly, And it is the highest Dignity and Honour that an intelligent discursive Nature is capable of.

Thirdly, And it brings in the greatest Profit and Advantage. To these three general Heads I shall confine all that I have to say to kindle and stir up this Affection.

First, It is most highly congruous, and doth very much beseeem a reasonable Creature :
And that for these following Reasons :

Reason 1.

First, Because God is the most excellent and lovely Object : And as in reason the greatest Beauty, (*ceteris paribus*) should attract the strongest Love, so the contrary implies absurdity and contradiction, which Reason doth abhor : For what can it be less than a Contradiction, for one that hath understanding, to prefer a less good, before a greater, there being equality and likeness in all other Circumstances ? The same rational Appetite that prompts us to love Goodness, doth also incline us to love the greatest Good, with the greatest heat and fervour of Affection : But especially when the difference is so vast as it is between God and all competitory Good whatsoever : They are but like a Drop to the whole Ocean, or a small Dust compared to the whole Globe of Earth : A single Beam of Light may as well stand up and vye Glory, as with the Sun : And a little Sword of Grass, may better compare with the Spirit of Life and Vegetation, and all the Flowers of the Field : as any Created Good may hold up its
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head against God : Shall I say ? As far as the East is from the West, or as far as the Heaven is above the Earth, so great is the distance between God and all Creatures put together ! Or rather, the distance is a thousand times greater, even infinite and incomprehensible, and far beyond any created Capacity to conceive.

His Excellency is most apparent above all other Things.

1. In that all the kinds and degrees of Excellency and Perfection are united in him, which are but scattered and divided amongst the Creatures, and that which they have but some faint degree of dwelleth in him, in the highest measure of fullness and exuperancy : So that if there be any Beauty or Glory in the Frame of Heaven and Earth, or any Creatures in them contained, that can stir up desire, and attract our Love, the same Motive with infinite Advantage may be fetch'd from the most lovely Nature of God ; And though the things with which Mortal Men are commonly moved, are not formally in God, because they imply imperfection : such as are Worldly Riches, Corporeal Beauty, Sensual Pleasures, and all those Accommodations which suit that part of us which is Flesh and Blood, yet they are in him these several ways, 1. *Per viam Eminentia*, by way of Excellency, as the rational Soul doth eminently contain the sensitive, though not formally : And as the understanding of Man, that invents Watches and Clocks, and other Utensils, is far better than they, and doth eminently contain them. 2. *Per viam Causalitatis*, by way of Efficiency, in that he is able to produce and create any

any of these things with the least Word of his Mouth: He is therefore eminently able to furnish out all good to the Soul that loveth him: And so he hath promised, To give them the desires of their Heart, that delight in him, *Psal.* 37. 4. And therefore the Apostle had ground enough to tell us, That Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, neither hath it entred into the Heart of Man, (in this life to understand) the things which God hath prepared for them that love him, *1 Cor.* 2. 9. And *David* had cause enough for such a passionate Invitation, *O tast, and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the Man that trusteth in him.* (Which Trust supposeth, and implieth Love.)

2. He is the productive Cause of all that is desirable, and truly Good, (as I just intimated before;) He is the Womb from whence all other Good hath its birth and original: For he hath made Heaven and Earth, and all that in them is, *Psalms* 95. 5. The Sea is his, and he made it, and his hands prepared the dry Land. And *Psal.* 104. *per totum.* There's no Virtue, Comeliness or Perfection in any Creature, but he is the Author of it. The Influences of the Heaven, and the Fertility of the Earth, and all the Verdure and Glory of the Grass and Flowers of the Field, do but declare and set forth his infinite Perfection; Who watereth the Hills from his Chambers, and the Earth is satisfied with the Fruit of his Works; And causeth the Grass to grow for the Cattel, and Herb for the Service of Man, that he may bring forth Food out of the Earth; And Wine, that maketh glad the Heart of Man, and Oyl to make his Face to shine, and Bread which strength-
neth

neth Man's Heart, *Psal.* 104. 13, 14, 15. And hath given to every Flower its distinct beauty and complexion, inſomuch that *Solomon* in all his Glory, is not arrayed like one of theſe, *Matth.* 6. 29.

It's true, he is no way the Author of ſin; (though he be the Cauſe of all that is deſirable) any other ways, than as he made Man, to whom that Monster, and Abortion, is wholly to be aſcribed, though it be ſo greedily deſired and committed.

But yet though it be actually ſo much deſired by Man, through his Ignorance and Miſtake, and the Corruption of his blinded and diſtemper'd Faculties, yet is not deſirable indeed, nor truly good, any otherwiſe than Chalk and Coals and Aſhes are to one that hath the *Pica*, and is diſtemper'd in the Stomach. I am forced to confeſs, though with grief of Heart, and to the ſhame and reproach of Mankind, that Man is come to that paſs, that he may drink Iniquity like Water, (*Job* 15. 16.) And call Evil, Good, and Good, Evil; and put Darkneſs, for Light, and Light, for Darkneſs; Bitter, for Sweet, and Sweet, for Bitter, (*Iſaiah* 5. 20.) But then it is becauſe the Foundations of his Soul are all out of courſe, and Senſe hath got the upper hand, and Reaſon is under Feet, and his Head ſtands where his Feet ſhould do: Alas! It is a ſad Conſideration, that the beſt of God's Creatures here on Earth, is become the worſt of Monsters: But this is no derogation from God's infinite Fulneſs and Perfection, that he is not the Productive Cauſe of ſuch a Poyſon as this, and the Father of ſuch a deformed loathſome Birth.

Reaſon

Reason 2d.

Secondly, It doth most highly beseem a Reasonable Creature to love God above all, because God hath most obliged us: His Love to us, bids highest, for the highest Return of Love again. If there were any thing in Heaven or Earth that had more obliged us than God, it had not been than a Fault, neither could Reason have risen up and accused us, if we had loved that thing more than God: But now that all Creatures both in Heaven and Earth are silent, and have nothing to say, and the love of God hath so loud a Tongue, and his infinite transcendent Favours do bespeak our Hearts so strongly, what an unpardonable sin is it to love any thing more than him? The Good we receive from others, is by his Special Command and Appointment, what we receive therefore from them, we are indebted unto God for: He is the first Mover; they are but his Instruments, to bring his Favours to us: Now though his Personal Excellency and Perfection, may justly challenge our greatest Love and Esteem, yet the unparallel Good he hath done us, doth call for much more. *Nimii durus est Animas* (saith *Seneca*) *qui & si Amorem non velit impendere, nolit rependere*: It's a base Nature indeed and highly unreasonable, that will not pay Love with Love. Can we be content to receive all from God, and to repay nothing back again? He that gives him not the prime and choice of his Affections, gives him nothing in the Scripture Account, yea, he is reputed a Hater of him, *Luke* 14. 26. If any Man come to me, and hate not, (that is, love them not less) his Father and Mother, and

and Wife and Children, and Brethren and Sisters, and his own Life also, he cannot be my Disciple : Let but some of those Numberless Favours which thou hast received from him, be but a while considered, and it will utterly shame and put to silence this odious sin : And the unthankful, hard-hearted sinner that is not melted by such love as this, must needs be confounded in the serious thoughts thereof, either here or hereafter. Here in Repentance, or hereafter in Torment.

1. Thou hast thy very Being from him, without which thou wert incapable of any Love or Kindness from God or any Creature : He gave thee that very Heart which thou deniest him, and whereby thou slightest him ; He gave thee thy Memory to remember him, Thy Mind to think upon him : He gave thee that Faculty of Love, that it might burn continually towards him : Ungrateful Soul, to set any thing above him in thy Love and Esteem ! That hadst been a Brute and no Man, if it had pleased him ! and might'st then have wanted such a gift to bestow on him, or any other thing.

2. The same Hand that gave thee thy Being at the first, doth yet continue it, and preserve thee every Day and Night, every Hour and Moment : If he should but subtract his Hand, thou would'st soon dye and return to thy Dust again : Thou hast forfeited Life, and deserved Death over and over. How oft hast thou run upon destruction, and he hath saved thee, and reversed the Sentence of Death, when the Law hath condemned thee ? And lengthned out this Life to thee, that thou might'st repent, and live for ever ? And dost
tho :

thou live by his meer grace and favour every day, and yet lovest him not above all other things? This is highly absurd and unreasonable.

3. Thy Life and all other Comforts, are not only the Fruit of his Bounty, but of his meer Grace and Mercy: They have been all forfeited a thousand times over: Every Sin calls for Sentence and Execution upon the sinner, and condemns him to universal want and misery: But the Blood of God hath purchased them back again to thee, and the hand of God hath restored them, and recovered so base a Wretch into a state of favour, and condition of hope: And under each of these comprehensive Mercies, infinite particulars might be reckoned up: And now what canst thou set up in Competition with Him? Thy Wit? Thine Understanding? Thy Health? Strength? Beauty? Friends? Riches? Honour? Life? Or any Provision that's made for it? These all belong to him, They are his Talents: Art thou a Debter to all, or any one of these, that thou shouldst serve, love, or esteem them, more than him who is so incomparably thy Benefactor?

Reason 3d.

Thirdly, God deserveth our greatest love, because he is to us, *The most suitable Good.*

Now that's the most suitable good, that doth most fully and fully supply all our Necessities and satisfy our most rational Desires; Now who, or what can pretend to compare with him in this respect, or stand in a competition with him?

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There

There are *Two great Necessities* which every Soul lies under, 1. The one is in respect of Sin: The 2d. in respect of Suffering and Misery, which Two comprize all the Wants and Necessities of Man: Both which none is capable of removing, but Christ our Redeemer, who is God-Man, blessed for evermore.

And for the first *Sin*, It exposeth every sinner to two great Wants: The One of *Pardon*; The Other of *Sanctification*: In the want of either of which, it's plainly impossible, that any Man should be happy.

And this needs no other Proof, that the bare Explication of what *Pardon* and *Sanctification* are.

1. *Pardon* is but the Removal of Guilt, which every Sinner doth contract. Now Guilt being an Obligation unto Punishment, Pardon must needs be the dissolving or nulling of that Obligation; which if it should continue, and not be removed, the guilty sinner must needs be terrified and affrighted with the sense of his obnoxiousness to God's displeasure, who perfectly hates Sin, and loves Justice and Righteousness, more than all his Creatures, and therefore must needs resent any Affront done to them, as it were to the Apple of his Eye, where such Guilt lies upon any Creature: which sense cannot but arise in every Sinner, when Conscience is awake, [which will be sooner or later;] And then he that knows God is his Enemy cannot sure be happy, since he hath infinite power and wisdom against him: And this is the very Case of every one that lies under Guilt unre-
moved, he hath Almighty God for his Enemy.

And

And as the want of Pardon cannot consist with Happiness, so neither can the want of

2. *Sanctification*. For as *he that hath God for his Enemy* cannot be happy, so neither can *he that is an Enemy unto God*: And such a one is every unsanctified and unrenewed Soul, who being unlike to God, cannot take pleasure in him, nor have any complacency in those things which are suited to his blessed Nature: But loves them just as the Bird doth the Snare, from whence he will fly and escape, with all the speed he can: But he that cannot *love God above all*, and delight chiefly in his Ways, can never be happy: because these are the only Ways that can perfect his Nature and make him happy.

Pardon and Sanctification being thus explained, it evidently follows by clear consequence, that without these two, the sinner cannot be happy, but such a one is every Man, and therefore without these *two Supplies*, no Soul can be happy: Thus much being evident and demonstrable, it is as plain that none can remove the *Guilt and Filth* that sin implies, but God who alone can remit sin, and sanctifie the sinner and dispose him by Holiness to the Love of God and all Righteousness, wherein his chief happiness doth consist.

The Second grand Necessity which Man lies under [which indeed comprehends all Necessities whatsoever] is *Misery* or Suffering, which comprizeth all that Evil in *Effect*, which sin doth in the *Cause*; All that Sickness and Sorrow, and Trouble and Fear, and Discontent and Death, and those sad Expectations after it, are the Fruit and Effect of Sin, by *Resultancy* oftentimes, and always by

way of a Righteous Punishment and Compensation: Yea, Sin is such a Monster, that it not only deserves, but also inflicts Evil upon the Mansion where it dwells, and like that *cruel Emperour*, rips up the Womb that bare it, and is both the *Malefactor and Executioner*, yea, and the very *Death* also that is inflicted. I mean, (that I may avoid Metaphors, and speak properly,) That Sin is both the meritorious, efficient, I, and formal Cause of a great part of our Sufferings and Calamity; though not in its formal, yet in its material Consideration. And as a Beast that being confined within its right Pasture, by some Pale, or Fence, doth by the same violence, break the Fence and hurt it self, and get into more Feeding: so doth every sinner, by the same Transgression, violate God's Law and his own Welfare, and is both *Active* and *Passive* in the same inordinate Action: For it's one great End of God's Law, to tye Mens hands, that they should not hurt themselves: So that *God's Honour* and *Man's Safety* do enter the very definition of all his Laws; so great is the Wisdom of our Supreme Law-giver: But the foregoing Similitude is but lame and doth not fully express the formal Effect of Sin, (as I may call it.) Tradition to Sin, is threatned as the most fearful Judgment in Scripture.

Now God alone that can remove the *Cause*, can also free the Sinner from the sad and woful Consequents, and then Happiness will be the Result: For he that is freed from all Evil whatsoever, and yet hath an immortal duration, must needs be happy. For without the blessed Fruition of God, such a reasonable Soul as Man hath,
that

that can see backwards, and forwards, and hath the Passions of Hope, Fear, Love, Joy, cannot possibly be at rest, and cease from self-tormenting Thoughts and Actions.

Since therefore it's God only that can supply all the Necessities of a rational Creature, it follows, that he only is the most suitable and proper good to such a Creature, and therefore *is principally, and as far as is possible to be desired and loved.*

This is the Third Reason why it is so highly congruous and doth so well beseeem a reasonable Creature, to love God above all.

Secondly, As it is most highly Congruous and Reasonable, so it is the Highest Dignity and Honour that a Rational Creature is capable of.

If Honour be truly to be estimated, either by the *Nobleness of the Act*, for which any one is honoured, or the *Persons* in whose Esteem we are advanced; both these ways be united to God above all things in Love, is the highest honour that a Creature can ever arrive to, unless it be to exchange sincerity of Love, for Perfection, or to add further degrees to this Love, till it comes to its *ultimum quod sic*, or vertical Point.

1. *There's no Act* that can put a greater Lustre upon the Agent, than that which is directly exercised upon God, especially in the way of Love. For the Object as it gives *Specification*, so it gives *Worth and Nobleness* to the Act, and that reflects it upon the Faculty first, and then upon the Agent, whose Faculty it is: For as the Act is more glo-

rious, that's exercised about a Kingdom, than that which is exercised upon lower and baser things; so that Faculty is more noble, that's capable of doing such an Act, than that which is capable only of doing the other Acts: And by consequence, he that steereth or governeth a Ship, is more honourable, than he that rows it: Or rather, a Prince is more honourable than a Plowman, because his Acts are conversant about a nobler object.

This being past dispute, it follows, that the Servant of God is far more highly dignified, than any other Servant whatsoever: Now Love being the principal Part of his Service, because it is the Service of the Heart, which he chiefly requires; It's therefore the highest Honour to Love him with the whole Heart.

2. And God esteems that Person most highly, that thus loves him: because All the Promises of the Gospel are made to such, which are the highest Expressions of God's Bounty and Love; And those whom he doth most richly endow and favour, them he doth most highly honour: Particularly,
1. God dwelleth in them here. 2. And they shall dwell with God hereafter. Now what greater Honour can there be, than Familiarity and Co-habitation with the *Fountain of all Honour*?

And as to love God superlatively and above all, is 1. Most Reasonable: 2. Most Honourable. So,

Thirdly, It brings in the greatest Profit and Advantage. For hereby,

First,

First, If this Love prevail over all other Love, it ascertainment to us,

1. That *Relative Grace* which consists in Pardon of all Sin; Justification of our Persons; Peace and Favour with God or Friendship with him; and Sonship to him; and Right to Heaven.

2. And also to all *Real Grace*, whereby every Christian is shaped and fashioned to the Divine Nature and Similitude: And therefore may confidently expect, that in the use of Means the Holy Spirit should enable him to thrive and bring forth the Fruit of a sounder Knowledge in Spiritual Things, of Patience, Humility, Meekness, Self-denial, Temperance, Brotherly Love, and Charity, every one of which is a Jewel of inestimable worth: In a word, He hath a sound Title, by the Free Charter of the Gospel, to all that Christ hath purchased and procured by the Merit of his Blood.

And as his Love encreaseth in the Degree and Measure, and groweth towards Perfection, so it doth encrease the Measure of every Grace; And then Assurance, which is the Consequent of an higher Measure of Grace than ordinary Christians aspire to, usually flows in: And then such a Measure of Boldness and Confidence in our Addresses to God, as doth usually fill the Heart with daily Comfort.

Secondly, And as this prevailing Love doth gather strength, so Peace at Home, and inward Calmness and Tranquility doth encrease: And this is a continual Feast, sweeter than all the troublesome, disturbing Pleasures of the World: The more any Soul is conscious to it self of a

prevailing Love to God, and that he hath the Supremacy in his Heart, the more all his Faculties do unite and conspire to Quietness, Rest, and Peace: For there's nothing that puts a Man into Tumult and Disorder, but the greedy desire after something that looks like Happiness, but when it's gotten, proves no such thing, and vexeth the Soul with Frustration and continual Disappointment: Now the more the Soul is in love with God, the more it is acquainted with the true happiness, and is the less in danger to be diverted by false and lying Promises: And when once the Soul hath got this Harbour, it will stir no more out so as to forsake it, but silently feeds on continual pleasure, and dwells at ease, as the *Psalmist* expresseth it, *Psalm*. 25. 13. And knows that all farther labour is vain, unless it be to grow more deeply rooted in love: And this Peace and inward Joy, is always the Companion of Assurance, in some sensible degree; however it may perchance be wanting to those, and altogether imperceptible, that have the weakest and lowest measure of true, or prevailing love to God.

Thirdly, And as this Love encreaseth all troublesome, slavish Fear, and sad Expectations do scatter and fly away: Who that hath the interest in God, that such a love doth entitle to, need to fear Sicknes, or Poverty, or Crosses, or Death it self considerably, if he knows he is united to one so firmly that hath Life and Death in his hands, and hath the Command of all Creatures in Heaven, and Earth and Hell? The Sleep of such a Man must needs be sweet; His Food, though never so course, cannot but refresh and comfort him;

And

And all his Comforts, are Comforts indeed ; because none of them are disturbed with those, Raving, Mad, and disturbing Passions, that every Man void of this love of God cannot be free from more or less : How quietly doth such a Man lie down and rise up, because the Lord, when he thus loves, maketh him to dwell continually in safety ? *Psal. 4. 8.*

Fourthly, As this Love encreaseth, Temptation will lose its force, and grow weaker and weaker : How little will Riches and Honour and worldly Pleasures draw that Man to commit sin, and displease God, that feels the love of God and the sweet Consequences of it in his Soul ? and also knows, that he hath or may have enough in him : They may tempt a Fool and one that hath little or no experience of the love of God, and that wants something to set his heart at rest and quiet : But he that is rich already, and truly happy, will not easily catch at shadows, but study to keep what he is possessed of, and which he knows to be Treasure indeed : He may in a short fit of inconsideracy, perhaps, forget God and his Soul, and give some ease to Temptation in such an hour, but he will quickly return again : And then when he remembers God again, he will be troubled, *Psal. 77. 3.* And his folly will cost him dear ; And his Soul will cleave the faster afterwards to God, when he hath been better taught by so bad experience.

Fifthly, As this love encreaseth, all base and sordid love will sink away and depart with confusion and shame : Who will love a Harlot that is deformed, when he may honestly enjoy sweeter and better

better love? Sure none but a perverted, distempered Mind. Who will feed upon Husks, when he may have the most pleasant, wholesome and delicious Fare? None but one that hath lost his Reason: And who will dote upon a Trifle, when he may have a Crown and Kingdom to be delighted with? Certainly so far as a Man feels he loves God, he disdains the love of other things, that will not consist with him: And he will abhor the Motion that's back'd with the greatest worldly Preferment, that would draw away his heart from God: Had he not tasted how good and gracious the Lord is, and how happy a thing it is to live in Unity with him; He might perchance hearken to every deluding Pleasure that courts his Affections: But after he hath received the love of God into his heart, and felt what a reviving Cordial it is, the Pleasures and Honours of the World come too late, and seem but Dung and Dross when they are laid in the Scales with that. *No Man, (saith our Saviour) having drunk old Wine, straightway desireth new: for he saith, The old is better, Luke 5. 39.* You know that famous Marquess (*Galeoc. Carac.*) was moved with indignation at such an offer as that: *Cursed are they (saith he) that think all the Gold and Silver in the World, worth one day's Communion with Christ.* And thrice wicked are they, that would wed Mens Affections to the World and divorce them from Christ: When there is a plain Competition or Contradiction between God and any worldly happiness, the presentment of such a happiness to a gracious heart, and one that truly loves God, looks like a motion from the Devil, and provokes him to fly
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in the face of him that makes it, and to abhor such a Sollicitor. Let me live, saith such a one, in Poverty and Raggs, rather than forgo what I now enjoy: Let those that never felt the love of God in their hearts, feed upon Trash, (if they please) I have a better Dyet. *Better is a little with the fear of the Lord (and his favour) than the greatest treasure without it, Prov. 15. 16. Better is a dinner of Herbs, where this love is, than a stalled Ox, and hatred therewith, vers. 17.* It's but a ridiculous, foolish thought, to think to draw an experienced Saint away from the love of God, by Silver and Gold, and a little gaudy Apparel, and delicious Fare, and two or three fair Words, and some few more slight Courtesies the World can do for him, when he sees the vast difference between an immoveable Rock, and a Reed shaken with every wind; *And that there is none in Heaven but God, and none upon the Earth that his soul can desire in comparison of him, Pf. 73. 25.*

The Law of thy Mouth (saith David) Psal. 119. 14. is dearer to me than thousands of Gold and Silver: more to be desired than Gold, yea than the most solid refined Gold; sweeter also than the Honey, and the dropping of the Honey-comb, Psalm 19. 10. And is the Law was so lovely and excellent in his esteem, much more the Law-giver.

I conclude therefore, that the Love of God is the best Antidote against all base and poisonous love whatsoever, and will not permit the World with any of its Pleasures to prevail where it is: It will cast this Bond-woman with her Sons, and not suffer them to be Co-heirs with God and his Son, Gal. 4. 30.

Since

Since therefore (O my Soul!) it is so highly consonant to that Reason that is in thee, and conduceth so much to the highest Honour and Perfection, and brings in such incomparable Advantage, Why art thou so backward and averse to this sweetest Imployment? which is so *sweet*, 1. In the very Exercise. 2. And *sweeter* the more it is exercised. 3. And makes all other Duty, *sweet, easie, and pleasant*; which for want of this *Quickner*, goes on but dully sometimes, and is quickly tyred: And so much as this warm Affection is wanting, all thy Services will wax more and more chill and cold, till at last, if that spark go quite out, (I mean as to the exercise) there will be a stop in all Duty, and all will be frozen up. And if the Pulse of this Affection cease to beat towards God, all Devotion and Exercise of Piety towards him, will suffer a *Deliquium*, and be in a fainting Fit and Swone.

Why then is thy heart no more transported with this Love? *David* felt so much pleasure and sweetness in this Work, that he could not forbear to provoke others to partake with him, in *this noblest delight*, by a most Patherical Invitation, *O Love the Lord, all ye his Saints, for the Lord preserveth the Faithful*, Psalm 31. 23. Thou canst love other things too sensibly, that have not half the force and strength that *this Object* hath to draw and invite this Affection; And have moreover, disappointed thee too often of the Pleasure and Felicity that from them thou hast expected: yea, and which is far worse, have entangled thee in many foolish and hurtful Lusts, which have afterwards betrayed thee to sad and bitter complaints.

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But here's an Object worthy thy strongest love, that will not debase and destroy, but advance thy Soul to the highest Perfection: The Love of him, as it is *sweet in the exercise*, so it will end at last in *unspeakable sweetness*; and will not upbraid thee with Folly afterwards, as all other Love will be sure to do: Thou mayest love other things too much, and here's the Source and Spring of all Sin and Impiety, and of all absurd and unreasonable Practices: For as *Divine Love* is the sum of Duty, and all worthy and becoming Actions; so *Carnal Love*, or the Love of Creatures, is the Sum of all Wickedness, and all incongruous and unseemly Practice: But God can never be exalted too high in thine *Estimation and Affections*: Here thou mayest safely vent and pour out all the store of thy Love with the greatest delight and security; and expatiate thy Soul to the widest extent in the Ocean of his infinite and most lovely Perfections: To him thou mayest safely offer up thy Soul in sacrifice, as a *whole-Burnt-Offering* in the Fire of Love for ever: Wilt thou permit thy Thoughts any more to fly abroad into Trifles and impertinent Matters, when thou hast the immense Ocean of Divine Goodness to lanch forth into, and mayest lose thy self, with the greatest pleasure and advantage, in the depths of his infinite Perfections: Here to be even drowned and swallowed up, is not Death, but the sweetest and most ravishing Life: Hast thou not pined long enough, and melted away in the Cares and Love of the World, the Martyrdom which corrupt Nature prompts thee fast enough to chuse? Is it not now more than Time to be wiser, and to bare
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an Honourable Testimony to him that hath redeemed thee? And to subscribe that Witness to the Truth, which thou hast borne too much hitherto to Lies and Falsehood? Let them be taken by thee for Fools and Madmen, that torture themselves with the Love and Care of this World, and take Hell by that violence, that the Kingdom of Heaven should be taken by: But let the main stream and current of thine Affections be ever after him, in whom are all the dimensions of Perfection: Some little Twilight and Glimmerings of his Ravishing Beauty thou hast seen in his *Words* and *Works*; But oh how short! how exceeding short have they been, through thy wilful Blindness and Inadvertency! But these express not the thousandth part of his wonderful, astonishing Splendour and Glory: Something it may be thou hast tasted of; his sweetest, reviving Love: But oh how little, in respect of what thou might'st have had, had it not been for thy own wilful neglect and refusal! Hadst thou gazed as much upon his Glory, as thou hast done upon the fading, transitory Glory of the World, and studied his Perfections, according to the Opportunities and Advantages he hath given thee, and not loved dismal, affrighting Darkness, rather than the quickning, transforming Light, and neglected the best use of thine Understanding and Affections in holy Meditations on God; Thou might'st confidently have expected the Blessing of God in a Work so well pleasing to him, and found the Treasure that would have made thee contemn all other things in Comparison: Then thou might'st have had joy in the darkest Night
of

of Affliction, and such an Allay to the bitterest Cup, that would have made any Condition welcome to thee : Then thou would'st have forgotten all the Miseries of thy life past, and remembered them as Waters that pass away, *Job* 11. 16. Then thou might'st have lyen down with the sense of the pardon of former sins, yea, thou might'st have lyen down, and thy sleep would have been sweet to thee. Then the Remembrance of thy latter End would not have been such an unpleasant Theme to thy Meditations, as now it is : yea, the Lord would have satisfied thy Soul in Drought, and made thee like a watered Garden, and like a Spring whose Waters fail not, *Isaiah* 58. 11. And then with what vivacity and chearfulness should'st thou have performed all Duty, and borne all Sufferings, when God had once answered thee in the joy of thy Heart !

Confidera-

Considerations to provoke to the Contempt of the World.

Psaln 119 96. *I have seen an End of all Perfection,
but thy Commandment is exceeding broad.*

1 John 2. 15, 16. *Love not the world, nor the things
that are in the world; if any man love the world,
the love of the Father is not in him: For all that
is in the world, the lust of the flesh, the lust of
the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Fa-
ther, but is of the world. Vers. 17. And the world
passeth away, and the lust thereof, but he that doeth
the will of God abideth for ever.*

Isa. 40. 6, 7. *All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness
thereof is like the flower of the field. The grass
withereth, and the flower fadeth, because the Spirit
of the Lord bloweth upon it.*

1 Cor. 7. 9. *The fashion of this world passeth away.*

Prov. 11. 4. *Riches profit not in the day of wrath, but
righteousness delivereth from death.*

Eccles. 1. 2. and 2. 11. *Vanity of vanities, all is va-
nity, saith the Preacher.*

Eccles. 1. 8. *All things are full of labour, man cannot
utter it: the eye is not satisfied with seeing, nor the
ear with hearing.*

Prov. 31. 30. *Favour is deceitful, and Beauty is vain.*

AS the Object of all rational, saving Love, is God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, and all that standeth in subserviency to him, so far as they conduce to this Noble End and Happiness of the Soul ; So the Object of all irrational, sinful, damning Love, is the World, and whatsoever serves to promote its interest in the Heart, so far as it is *Competitory* with, or *Contradictory* to the Interest of God ; and conduceth to the inordinate pleasing of the Flesh : And thus much I intend here by the World, (that is) any thing in the whole Creation, that doth not refer to, and is not subordinate unto God, is to be the Object of this Contempt and Disdain.

First, Because the World is unsatisfactory and cannot content the Mind of Man ; There is something still that the Soul misseth, when it hath all here that it can desire : It silently imagineth an *Aliquid ultra*, when it hath gone its farthest in the Happiness and Prosperity here on Earth : And it's so far from Rest, after all, that it grows more hot and impatient in its desires : And finding nothing to pursue after, that can give content, begins to fret, and grow peevish : when the ambitious Soul is gotten to the top of Honour, he finds not the thing he expected, he calls it by all the slight and contemptible Names he can invent, or imagin : you may as well satisfy the Appetite of an hungry Man with Grace and Virtue, or something that's purely Spiritual, as fill the Soul and Spirit of a Man, with Earth, and Earthly Things, or any thing of a gross or corporeal

poreal Nature, because there is so little Likeness and Proportion between the Appetite and the Food: *Prov.* 27. 20. Hell and Destruction are never full, so the Eyes of Man are never satisfied. *Eccles.* 1. 8. As the Horse-leach hath two Daughters that cry, Give, give, (*Prov.* 30. 15.) which some understand of its forked Tongue, that hath two Suckers at the end of it) so there is in Man by Nature, *first* an eager desire after these worldly things, and *secondly* an uneasiness or want of content, when he hath gotten them, and a more burning desire after them; which is worse than the former: As that Thirst is always worse which proceeds from too much drinking, than that which proceeds from a total want of drink.

These shews what unsatisfactory things they are, in that they do not quiet and content, but rather more enrage our desires, and vex and discompose the Heart: *Eccles.* 5. 10. He that loveth Silver, &c.

Secondly, Because they are so short and limited in their virtue and operation: It's commonly but one or two Necessities, that one Creature can supply, and those but very imperfectly; But all together, cannot supply the one half of the Wants and Necessities that Man is subject to: Fire may relieve one that is cold, but cannot fill the Belly of an hungry Man; Company may a little refresh him that is weary of Solitude, but real Sickness and Pain it cannot remove: And all other Creatures have their stint and measure: Let but a Man be distressed in Conscience, and frightened with the Thoughts of Death, and terrified with sad Expectations of Judgment afterwards,
and

and even confounded with the Thoughts of Hell, and the Torments thereof. And all the World cannot help him in such a streight : Nay,

Thirdly, They are such winged, transitory things, that they are worthy to be contemned ; What speed do they make to get away, when we have the fastest hold of them ? They make as much hast as a Ship that saileth with the advantage of Wind and Tide. Who can name the Comfort he hath had on Earth, that hath lasted to the small Measure and Extent of an Hundred Years ? Nay, I may confidently say to half a hundred ; 'Tis not one in Twenty that lives to Fifty Years ; And when Life's gone, all is gone : Who is there that enjoys Health twenty Years together, without some interruption ? Scarce one in a Kingdom : But for the most part, Men are like their Ley-fields, (as they are called) that it may be rest one year, and are ploughed another : Let the mad and distracted World prize and prefer such a fading Flower, as is the Glory of this World, before Heaven, and an Eternal Life with God ; Let the World take the World, and they that are dead in Trespasses, and Sins, take these dead, momentary and insipid Pleasures : It's Life and Substance that a wite and sober Man will thirst after, and something that will last beyond the Term of this present : He that believes to purpose the Life to come, would not be condemned to a brutish, sensual, and voluptuous Life, nor the Pleasures that distracted Men are mad after, who then laugh most, when God is farthest from their thoughts, and then have the

sweetest Dreams when Faith and Reason are in the deepest sleep.

Fourthly, As all the Comforts here on Earth are fugitive and passant, so they are most uncertain: They lye open to so many Accidents and Casualties, that no one hath security enough, that he shall keep them one hour.

Quod cuiquam accidere, cuius potest.

They are liable to a *double uncertainty*;

1. The one is from their own fluid perishing Nature and Inconstancy.

2. The other from the fickle and corruptible Nature of the Owner.

First, Their inconstancy and mutable Nature doth appear in that they may and do change

1. Their Nature } even whilst the

2. Their Master } Owner lives.

1. They may change their Nature; Land may change its Fertility, and become barren and good for nothing, while the Owner stands by and looks on; or else if his Fruit grow up and raise his expectation, there's a thousand Accidents may intercept it, before it come into his Store-house, and be laid up for his immediate use; it may be suddenly smitten with a blast from Heaven; it may be parched with excessive heats, or nipp'd with cold, and drowned with intemperate showers: Or if it escapes all these, the Lord may command his Armies, the Locusts and Caterpillers, or some Vermin to devour it: There are Ways
enough

enough past finding out, which the Wit of Man cannot foresee, or if it could, cannot prevent, by which the Hopes of the present Master, or Incumbent, may be blasted; The place where a Man lives, that was once commodious, and a comfortable Residence, may suddenly become inhospitable, by reason of the corrupted Air, or Persons amongst whom we live: The House that shelters us may be soon turned into Ashes, by a devouring Fire. Or,

2. They may change their Master; They may be taken away by Fraud, or Violence: Every one that hath but Mind enough to what we have, and Wit enough to contrive how to get it into his possession, and Wickedness enough to execute what he hath contrived, and Grace too little to restrain him, may quickly alter the Property of what we have, and be Master of our best Enjoyments: And it's sad to think, what a great part of Mankind they be that have all these Hellish Properties.

Or if all this will not load the fickle things of this World with disgrace enough, and they may scape all the forementioned Casualties, yet,

Secondly, The Owner may be taken from them? Who can say that his Pulse shall certainly beat an hour longer? Such a vapour is the Life of Man, that there scarce can be any more uncertain Tenure: When his Mountain stands strongest, yet he is in the hands of him that set fast the Mountains, who is girded with power enough to overturn them with one Word or Beck: *My Times are in thy hands*, saith David, Psalm 31. 15.

Yea, to superadd one more Disparagement.

Thirdly, Whilst the Enjoyment and Enjoyer both continue together, a Man may want an Appetite, and so relish nothing that he hath, *Eccles.* 8. 1, 2. There is an Evil: And then no wonder if he starve in the midst of Plenty; and pine away from day to day, whilst he hath the most nourishing restorative Food that Earth can set before him: It will then be no marvel, if Leanness enter into his Soul, though God hath given him all that his Flesh can desire, (*Psal.* 106. 15.) If the Rich Man's Pallate be but a little scaverish, through the Distempers of his Body or Mind, his great Revenues, his stately House, his beautiful Wife, his numerous Off-spring, all his Flatterers, and the rest of his Accommodations, signifie nothing to him: yea, a little Pet or Discontent, will turn all into Gall and Bitterness, and make him most angry with those that study to please him most.

Fifthly, To shew yet further how worthy they are to be contemned, Consider, They are gotten with much difficulty; Kept with much care and trouble; Lost with much sorrow: 1. It's not one of many that gets the Riches of this World; some indeed are born to them, but how many are defeated of their hopes, before they grow up: And what doth their Birth-right serve for, but to make them the more miserable? This is all the Priviledge they have, by being born of Rich and Noble Parents, that perchance fall into Poverty or Disgrace, before their Children are ripe: And for the rest, how many Difficulties do they pass, before they get them into their Possession? It may

may be Twenty or Thirty Years they are subject to the Will and Humour of those that give them: And when they have done all, it may be, they are disinherited, and put to hard shifts. But of those that are not born to them, they are more hardly gotten; It costs them many a weary day, and many a restless, watchful Night, much Sweat and Pain, to get a poor, little Portion! And yet the greatest part of the Price by which they are usually purchased, is yet behind; Whilst they are venturing after Riches, they too frequently lose God and their Souls, if not by a plain and open, yet by a secret and virtual renouncing of them: though not by gross and manifest wickedness, yet by a sinful and dangerous neglect of God and their Souls: And yet of those that thus labour for them, the greatest part do not succeed.

2. But yet after they are once gotten; Are they not too often wrecked with Cares and Thoughts how to preserve and keep them? They are fain to bear the Blows of them that are above them; And the Envy and *Eccles. 5. 12.* Discontents of those that are under them, and the Cheats and Circumvention of those that have more Wit. And,

3. Which is the most ponderous Aggravation of their Vanity, As Men are sick for them, so are they sick of them, and yet they count it death to part with them: First they are sick of desire, before they get them, and then they are by and by sick of Fruition; But it cuts them to the heart, to have the morbidick matter removed: And yet whether they consent or not, when all is

done, and the utmost diligence is used to defend them, they must part at last, and the owner must leave them, or they will leave the owner.

Sixthly, They are the great Snares and Temptations of Mens Souls : What is it that draws any Man to sin against God, and destroy his own Soul, but the sweet Bit of worldly Pleasure or Profit ? No Man would swear or lye, or deal deceitfully, or live idly, or drink and whore, but for the pleasure and advantage that he expects in so doing. Who would covet and care for the World, and labour so painfully to get it into his Possession, if he did not dream of Happiness from it ? And yet it is but a Dream ; And every Promise that the World makes of true Content and Felicity, is but a Lye : And he that's over-credulous in such a Case as this, is worse than mad : True it is, the World hath something in it that's fitted to the pleasure and delight of Flesh and Blood, in an ordinary Course of Providence : And we being so prone to please, yea, and over-please *this Part*, we are in great and continual danger from the World ? And wilt thou so much esteem and seek after that, that will destroy thee, if thou learn not to slight and contemn it ? Hast thou sped so well already, (O my Soul !) that thou should'st be still tampering with it ? Hast thou so well quit thy self already, and escaped the Thrusts it hath made at thee ? Hath it made no breach in the Conscience ? No Wounds in thy Heart ? Hath it begot no Strangeness nor Jealousie between God and thy Soul ? Hath it not sadly wounded thee in thine Intellectuals, and much perverted thine Understanding ? Hath it done no Mischief to thy

thy Will and Affections, but helped them Heavenwards to the only Place of their Rest ? I would it had thus dealt with thee ; But such a Friend it never was, nor will be whilst it's loved for its self.

Seventhly, The World is God's great (if not only Competitor) and therefore in so much deserves to be contemned : Though the Devil and the Flesh, fight against God both of them, and use the World as their chief Weapon, yet by way of object to Man's Soul, there's nothing but God and the World, openly pretend to be Man's Happiness : The Devil doth but set this Bait before us, when he tempts us unto sin ; He dare not appear himself, to draw any by his own proper and innate beauty, who is almost known of all, to be so monstrous and deformed ; and whom every one [that is not himself become a Monster] hath a natural instinct to hate and abhor.

Indeed there be some few such that he hath gotten so wholly into his power, [through the just and fearful permission of God ; for their wicked Rejection and Contempt of him] that they take him for their Ruler and Guide to Happiness, for want of a better, and swear Fealty to him ; But I believe it is with some secret Reluctancy and Regret : But however, I here understand World in so large a sense, as to involve all Creatures in its Latitude : And what, doth it not seem a ridiculous thing and odious Competition, for the World or Devil to stand against God, and compare their Worth and Excellency with his ? Let them shew their own, if they will
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vye with him : Or let them bring something that's lasting and satisfactory ? Let them shew something that will answer all the hopes and expectations of Man ? Something that will help him in every streight and necessity : Nay, that will free him from all such streights and necessities, if they would have the honour of rational love and esteem : What shall Dung and Dross lye in the Scales, with an Eternal weight of Glory ? Shall it put any one, but a Fool, to debate which he shall chuse, when there is such an unspeakable difference ? Art thou so void of Understanding, and so much forsaken of common Reason, that any thing shall seem desirable to thee, that's laid in the Ballance with the Fountain of all Goodness ? O let thine Heart abhor its former Guiltiness in this kind, and henceforth boyl up with Hatred and Contempt against such an Usurper that would be preferred before God ; Resolve, and that fixedly, never to hearken to such an impious and absurd Motion.

Eighthly, The Love of the World is but meer Flattery and Deceit : It is not to be trusted when it makes the most fair and faithful Promises, and gives the strongest security to Performance : *Job, Haman, Manasseh, Zedekiah, and Jehoiakim*, are proof enough of this, to go no further than the Bible : *Look not on the Vine, (saith Solomon) when it is red, when it giveth its colour in the Cup, when it moveth it self aright, At the last it biteth like a Serpent, and stingeth like an Adder*, Prov. 23. 31, 32. When the World smiles most, and looks the most pleasingly, it usually gives the most mortal stab : Let the Experience of all Ages speak out, and tell

tell us plainly, how the World hath used its greatest Followers and Admirers: some it hath taken from the Top of all their worldly Dignity and Glory, and made the very Scorn and Contempt of all. Thus it served the famous *Belisarius*, that great and worthy Commander under the Emperour *Justinian*: Thus also it served *Seianus*, the great Favorite of *Tiberius*, and *Pillippa* the *Catanian*, that was so famous in the Court of *Naples*: Thus it used the great *Darius*, *Cyrus*, *Craesus*, and the proud *Bajazet*, with infinite others, that were gotten to the height of worldly Prosperity: But those that it hath used best, it hath left them at last to grapple with Death and Judgment. It saves none from the devouring stroke of Death: It accompanies none beyond the Grave; Thither if it chance to bring any of its Paramours, there to be sure it leaves them: Their Glory shall not depart after them, *Psalms 49. 17.* The Happiness and Felicity of the World will be sure to leave us in our greatest need: These Guards will be sure to wither before the Morning of the Resurrection, when we shall need most Protection from the scorching heat of God's wrath: But if we go to the Sanctuary, there we may more certainly learn, how it hath, and will befriend those that have doted most upon it, and have ventured the Favour of God, and their Everlasting Hopes, for the World: *Psalms 92. 7. When the wicked spring as the grass, and all the workers of iniquity do flourish, it is that they shall be destroyed for ever.* And how doth the World then stand up in their behalf, when they are betrayed thereby to such a fearful Destruction? It leaves them to the stroke
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of Justice, to shift for themselves : Job 20. 5, 6, 7. *The triumphing of the wicked is short, and the joy of the hypocrite is but for a moment; Though his excellency mount up to the heavens, and his head reach unto the clouds, yet he shall perish for ever, as his own dung: All they which have seen him, shall say, Where is he? This is the Portion of a wicked man from God, and the heritage appointed unto him by God, Job 20. 29.* Thus the World gives up its Lovers to the Wrath of God, and shall come in as a Witness also to their Everlasting Confusion.

Nimble, The prevailing Love of any thing here on Earth, is a Sin not fit to be pardoned, if a Man dye in it: And it is an infallible Mark of one, that shall perish without Mercy, yea, and of one whom God hateth: 1 John 2. 15. *Love not the world, nor the things of the world. If any man love the world, (in this predominant measure) the love of the Father is not in him. And James 4. 4. Ye adulterers and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world, is enmity with God? He therefore that will be a friend of the world, is an enemy unto God. Luke 14. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not [that is, love them not less] his Father, and Mother, and Wife and Children, and Brethren, and Sisters, and his own Life, much more all other things, he cannot be my Disciple.* These are the plain Passages of God's Word, that shew manifestly, how every one shall be sure to speed, that loveth any thing here below, more than Christ: No Apology can be made for such a one, neither is such a one a Subject capable of Mercy, if he live and dye in that state, that sets so light
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by it, and God the Author of it, as to prefer such a short-liv'd Trifle before him : That say unto God Directly, or by Consequence, by Word, or Practice, stand thou here at my Foot-stool, when the World is exalted and set up in Honour and Esteem : In a word, to love any Thing more than God, is a Sin that the Gospel hath no pardon for, if it be final, because it argues an ungodly Heart, and he that's ungodly, cannot be a Believer or a Christian : Because the Means, presuppose the End, and Christianity, which is the way to God, presupposeth Godliness, or some Love to God, [who is the End intended or desired,] And without Faith the Gospel Grant giveth no Remission of Sin.

Tenthly, Till a Man can contemn the World, (in the sense before stated) he is no better than a Brute : so far is he from the Life and Spirit of a Christian : Christianity doth not depose, but always suppose Reason : It doth refine and not subvert, and undermine it : And where a Man is not got so high, as the sober use of his Reason, he is not fit to be a Disciple of Christ : He that follows not the Light and Guidance of his Natural Reason for the main, when Sense and Passion do oppose, and make head against it, though he hath the distinctive Faculty of a Man, yet is not a Man, in Use and Exercise, but a Brute : And he that's no Man, be sure is no Christian : But he that prefers his Body before his Soul, in the main Course of his Conversation, lives not so as the Light of Nature can direct him : The clearest Reason doth suggest, that the better part is to be principally looked after : And that a Man hath

hath a Soul, as well as a Body, we need not go to Scripture for an Argument, as if there were no Light elsewhere to inform us: There be other Topicks common to us with Infidels and Heathen: Now the World is but the Accommodation of the Sensual Part, And he that cannot slight and condemn this, when it thwarts the Interest of his Better Part; He is so far from learning that which is supernatural in the Doctrine of Christ, and Salvation, that he hath not learned that which is but Natural, and the Object of a lower Faculty: He is so far from the higher Acts of Faith, that he wants the lower Acts of Reason, and hath not the presupposed Matter that's required to the Christian Faith.

Eleventhly, The Contempt of Earth and Earthly Things, lays an excellent Foundation for a cleer and piercing Understanding: For nothing doth so much dull and sot the Intellect, as Earthly Pleasure, and Sensual Delight, which makes the Flesh insolent, the Passions masterless and untractable, the Mind listless and unfit to search after wisdom: And whilst the Soul is daily offended with the streams of a Body drunk with Earthly Pleasures, the vigor and sprightfulness of it is quite extinguished: And the understanding is quite perverted, and knows not how to discern and judge aright, when it is upon any search: For nothing will enter such a perverted Mind, or seem Credible, that doth any ways thwart this Carnal, Brutish Pleasure: It's difficult, if not impossible, to see clearly in the Dust of Riches, and Smoke of Honours: Besides, Earthly Love betrays to Ease, Softness, and Intemperance, which are very inconsistent

sistent with an acute understanding : But the Contempt of such sensual Pleasures, inspires the Mind with true Accuracy, and gives it a piercing Eye : For having now no hankering thoughts or desires after these things , it's always fit to consider, and fix seriously upon any proposed Object, and to see things in their proper Evidence ; because there is nothing to bribe the Understanding, and so it becomes impartial in its search and examination.

Twelfthly, This forementioned disdain of the World and its Pleasures, makes a most ready way to inward Peace and Quietness : For these Sensual Baits are the Inciters of our Passions, and when they are up, there is no Rest, nor Quiet : That Man is like to be sedate, calm and undisturbed, that doth not much care for any of these changeable Comforts : There will be a pleasant silence in the heart, when it is not provoked by the insolencies of the Flesh, which then will domineer, whilst it hath there sensual Accommodations, but grows tame and tractable, when it is pretty well weaned, and weakened through the want of them, if other Necessaries do concur : Why art thou so patient , O my Soul ! under the Rage and domineering Power of the Flesh, and its head-strong Lusts ? Why dost thou so frequently Consent to the Love and Pursuit of such poor, short, and uncertain Felicity, that fills thee with so much disturbance, and alienates thee from God, and doth so much destroy all thy future Hopes ?

Lastly, It may help forward this Contempt of the World, to consider seriously the vanity of Man, who is the Noblest Part of it : *Verily, every Man*

Man (saith *David*) at his best Estate, is לֵב-חַלְדָּי

All manner of Vanity: as it is in the Original. *Psalms* 39. 6. A Helpless Friend, and a Toothless Enemy: And therefore he that trusteth Man, maketh a broken Reed his Confidence: And he that hath an inordinate Fear

* *Isa* 51. 12. and v. of Man, feareth a shadow:

7, 8. *Isa*. 2. 22.

* *Who art thou*, saith the Prophet, *that art a afraid of*

a Man, that shall die, and of the Son of Man, that shall be made as Grass? There's no sadder Spectacle in the World than Man, if this were his best condition, and he had all he were to look for in this life: A Toad, or the most hated Creature, no nor those that are continually hunted and pursued, and live always in danger of the Snare, or some cruel Device to take away their Lives, are not half so sad a Spectacle as Man is, I mean without the Grace of God. These Brutish Creatures neither apprehend, nor fear the Snare, till they are caught in it; nor foresee a Michief, till it is at hand; nor vex themselves with the Memory of what is past: But *Reason* which is *Man's proper Utensil*, makes him but the more capable Subject of Misery and Torment, and helps him to suffer a Mischiefe before it comes, and to feel it a long while after; This is such a Faculty, as teacheth him to improve his Sufferings and Calamities, (which no other Creature that wants it can do) and to chew upon an Evil when it's swallowed down and past. Should a Believer fear the Frowns of such a silly Creature, or regard his Favour? when he would threaten or tice him from his Duty! I conclude therefore, *It's better to trust*

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in the Lord, than to put any confidence in man; yea, it is much better to trust in the Lord, than to put confidence in Princes, Psal. 118. 8, 9.

Consider then, O my Soul! what a meer Juggle and Delusion is the Pleasure of this World, with which thou hast so often suffered thy self to be couzened, and deceived? What Luggage is the Riches? And what a Blast is the Honour thereof? Yea, what a Dream and meer imagination is all that here Men dote upon? Is it for this that Men swear and deceive, couzen and lye, sweat and run about with foolish heat and diligence? Is this the Reward of all the busle and stir they make? Is this all the Recompence of their bold Adventures against God and their own Souls? Have they no more for all their restless Nights and Days, for all the Cares and Fears, with which they have so often pierced themselves? Have they no more for *Their Salvation*, for *A Life of Immortality*, for God, and for *Their Souls*, which they have thrown away for a little slippery uncertain pleasure, which stings even whilst it's tasted, and wounds so deep afterwards?

Wonderful! that ever Men that have an Eye of Reason to discern thus much, should yet suffer themselves to be so befooled! And should prefer the pleasure of Delirancy and madness, before that of Sobriety! That ever Reasonable Creatures should suffer themselves to be entangled in Vanities, which are more brittle than Glass, more light than Smoak, and more swift than the Wind! That they should feed so greedily, and sat themselves with these poisonous, destroying Pleasures, and go with the foolish Ox to the slaughter, and

with the Fool to the Correction of the Stocks !
 Till a Dart strike through their Liver, not considering that it is for their Life ! O what madness to nourish this Carrion and Dung-hill of thy Body, and to neglect, forget, and despise thy Soul ! Is it possible that thou shouldst so Adore a Prison, or Fetters, as to balance them with the Love of thy *dearest Saviour* ? Who can shed Tears enough, or Weep sufficiently for such a Sin as this ? (*viz.*) The forsaking of God, and the chusing of Lyes instead of him ? O what horrid Phantasms will appear one Day, and present themselves to their sight, that proceed on, and dye in such a sin as this ! When the Pleasures which they have chosen shall stand in Array before them, and upbraid them into the deepest shame and silence : And the objects with which they have committed Folly so often, shall stand forth and say, *I am the Pleasure which thou hast loved more than God ; I am the Ambition to which thou wast a slave : I am the Wealth that was the Aim of all thy Actions : I am the Dung and Dross to which thou didst espouse and wed thine Affections : Behold the Sins thou hast begotten on me ; Behold thy deformed, loathsome Iniquities, which thou didst not only love, but prefer before the Life which thy Saviour did both live and teach : With such dreadful Complaints [able to rend Rocks and Marbles] shall they that have loved any thing here on Earth, more than God and their Souls, lament over their sins that will come upon them like an Armed Man, and fight them with its gastly Looks.*

If thou Love any thing, then, O my Soul!
 See that thou love it for God, and for the refer-
 ence that it hath to the Life Eternal: The Joys
 of Heaven are without their Parallel and Ex-
 ample: And as they are here above our Expe-
 rience, so they pass beyond our Imagination;
 Fancy what thou wilt, and Majesty, Pomp, and
 Beauty can present thee with, it's all but a poor
 faint Resemblance of the Glorious Life to come:
 It's easier for a *Pencil* to draw the Picture of *Sound*
 and *Tast*, than for the *Tongue* to utter, or the
Heart to imagin *The Joys of Heaven*. All that
 a curious Artift can do, to describe the Content
 of a Soul at Rest with God, and perfectly Happy,
 is so far from what he would but cannot say, as
 Heaven is from Earth; We know, There's no-
 thing of all this, that we see, hear, or tast, or
 imagin, in the Heavenly Paradise; But thou
 mayest be sure there's more than all this.

D d 3 Considera-

**Considerations to excite Shame and
hearty Sorrow for all former
Departure from God, and pre-
sent Strangeness to him.**

THough God delighteth not in Sorrow and
Contrition, merely as it is the Misery and
Affliction of his Creature; but rather is affected
with them in all their Sorrows: *Isaiah 63. 9.*
yet as it is an expression of any sincere hatred of
former sin, and willingness to forsake it, and
comes from any true Love to God who is disho-
noured by it, and Mens own Souls, of which it
is the death and destruction; and leads directly
to their future Reformation and Happiness, so
the Lord is delighted therewith: And a sinner,
one that is yet under the guilt of his sins, cannot
present him with a better Sacrifice; For, *The Sa-
crifices of God are a broken Spirit: a broken and
contrite heart, O Lord, thou wilt not despise, Psalm*
51. 17. (1.) Thou wilt take pleasure in by a
usual Figure, called *Litote* or *Mecoses*: And in
the former Clause of the Verse, The Sacrifices;
(that is) The Sacrifice of Sacrifices: as the Heaven
of Heavens is put for the Highest Heaven: In
which Forms of Speech, it's customary with the

Hebrew

Hebrew Language to leave out the first *Substantive*. * Hence בְּהֵמוֹת is put for the *Elephant*, because she is the chief *Saith Grot.* of Beasts בְּהֵמָה בְּהֵמָה : And

אלהים is put for God himself, because he is אלהים אלהים : So חֲכָמָה is put for חֲכָמָה the most excellent wisdom, *Psal.* 49. 3. So the *Canticles* is put for the *Canticle of Canticles*, or the most excellent Song : Instances there are many of this kind, to shew that the *Plural Number* is sometime instead of the *Comparative Degree* : Thus you see in what sense God is delighted in our Sorrow, and taketh pleasure in a sighing and broken Heart, even in the same sense that *Paul* was glad at the sadness of the *Corinthians*, even as it was a sign of, and step to their future Amendment and Happiness : *2 Cor.* 2. 2. *For if I make you sorry, (saith he) who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me ?* And indeed it is no wonder that the merciful God that delighteth so much in the welfare and felicity of his Creatures, should yet be so well pleased in the bitter Repentance and heart-breaking Sorrow of sinful Creatures, since it is such a preparative to your future Joy, and that so many excellent Texts of Scripture are dropt from the Holy Spirit, to encourage Sinners to labour after such a wounding, piercing Sorrow as this is. So *Isaiah* 57. 15. *Thus saith the high and lofty One, that inhabiteth Eternity, (whose Name is Holy) I dwell in the High and Holy Place with him also that is of a contrite and humble Spirit, to revive the Spirit of the Humble, and the Heart of*

the Contrite one. So *Isaiah 66. 2.* There he seemeth to despise and slight the most magnificent, stately Structure which they could build him, and to prefer the humble, contrite Heart far before all that the Hands of Men could possibly make : *Thus saith the Lord, The Heaven is my Throne, and the Earth is my Footstool, where is the House that ye build unto me ? And where is the place of my rest ? For all these things hath my Hand made——* But to this Man will I look, even to him that is poor and of a contrite spirit, and trembleth at my Word. And how frequently is he said to comfort those that Mourn, and to bind up the broken in Heart, to regard their Sighs, and bottle up their Tears ; as if there were no Temper that God more delighteth in.

There are some (though very few) that need to be warned and admonished, that they do not place the Principal Part of God's Worship and Service, in Sighs, and Tears, and pricking Sorrow, and shameful Confessions of their Sin : (Not that I dissuade any from giving due Time and Measure to these humbling, self-abasing Acts ; For it is the design and business of this present Labour, to promote this Sorrow in the Heart, so far as it is a fit Instrument to promote Reformation in the Heart and Life.) But yet some, I say, have need of this Caution, that they lay not too much stress upon this part of our Duty we owe unto God ; much less that they confine the whole work and business of Religion, to Acts of Contrition and Mortification : For though the Lord delighteth in the penitent, broken Heart, that mourneth over all its former Sin and Folly, and
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is ashamed of his odious, hainous Transgressions, and doth loath himself for his Iniquities, and doth particularly search into his Sores, and uncover them before God, with the most distinct, clear, and open Confession; yet this is but a lower and preparatory step, to that Love of God, constant delight in him, praises of him, chearful obedience to him in the which he is far more delighted: so that Tears, and Sorrow, and heart-melting Repentance, and afflicting our Souls, are not *absolutely* pleasing to God, and a part of the immutable, unchangeable Worship we owe to him, but only acceptable to him,

1. Upon supposition of former Miscarriages.

2. In preparation to future Obedience.

Had we never sinned, Sorrow and Repentance had been no acceptable Service to God at all, neither would it have pleased him to see us go heavily as those that mourn.

But now, supposing that every one of us is born into the World with hereditary Corruption, and a depraved Nature, quite contrary to that which God gave Man at the first, the very first acceptable Service that we can perform to God, is to be sensible of and to bewail this perverse Disposition, according to its desert, and to weigh, and consider all the sad and woful Consequences of such a poisoned, corrupted Nature, how hateful it is to God, how disgraceful to our selves here, and how destructive to our souls hereafter, and how dangerous and infectious it is to others, that we are firmly resolved to take any Course to recover our former Freedom and Priviledge we had in the state of Innocency, that God shall suggest

to us: It is as preposterous to offer up any Service to God, till this be done, as it is to learn to Read, before we are acquainted with the Letters, of which every Word we read is composed; or as it is to give restorative Food to a distempered Body, before the peccant Matter be purg'd out that is the cause of the Distemper: But then though it be the first step in Religion, and the first acceptable Service we can perform to God: It is not there that we must rest; we are not there to sit down and advance no further, as if we were gotten to *Hercules Pillars*, and there were no higher Perfection to be attained in Religion: And to mistake the subordinate and subservient part of God's Service, for that which is more perfect and principal, For hereby Sin and the Devil will get these

Two great Advantages: 1. God will be misrepresented both to our selves and others, and he that is so full of Compassion, and Mercy, and all amicable and lovely Perfections, will be thought by the Religion which he prescribes, to be cruel and unmerciful, and to delight in the Torment and Affliction of his Creatures: For Men will be drawing his Image by such a false Pencil. And then,

2. They that make it their whole endeavour to weep and mourn and afflict themselves for their sins, will thereby disable both Body and Soul for any Service of God at all, and both destroy their Bodily Health, and overthrow their Reason: And so whilst they are bewailing their Sin, and as they think are conquering of it, they do but entangle themselves the more, and utterly

terly waste that strength that should mortifie and subdue it.

And the reason why God doth speak so much in his Word, in approbation of the sorrowful, broken and contrite Heart, which I doubt is the Reason of these Mens mistake, is because such Persons have need of such Encouragement, and might otherwise faint under the Anguish and Burthen of their Spirits, and therefore because he would not break the bruised Reed, nor quench the smoking Flax, till he hath brought forth Judgment unto Victory, He gives these Cordials to such as are under the Pangs of the New Birth: But he had much rather that Men would leave the Principles of the Doctrin of Christ, and not stick always at the Foundation of Repentance from Dead Works, and of Faith towards God: Not that we are to shake hands with Repentance and sorrow for Sin, after we are once heartily converted, unless we could be sure to commit no more sin: But then sin will need a more short and transient sorrow, when we presently bewail it so soon as ever it is committed; But our first Repentance and Sorrow will cost us hotter Water, and put us to more trouble.

If a Man that hath a long Journey to go, should set out a quite contrary way to the place whither he is to go, and so travel on, till he hath spent half or more of the time that is allotted for his Journey, you must needs think that will cost him more vexation and trouble to get into his right way, than after he is gotten in, if he should chance to step out a Mile or two: A small Errour
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is more speedily corrected than a great one of long continuance : But yet it is always true, That it's better to prevent sin, and keep out of it at the first, than to get out of it by Repentance : Though by Accident, and through the Mercy of God, it may sometimes prove better to the sinner, that he did fall into sin, if he doth afterwards heartily repent of it : But absolutely, and in it self, it is not better : And he that should presume to let loose the Reigns to Sin upon that account, I believe would find it much worse.

But before I produce those Considerations ; which, through the Blessing of God, may stir up and strengthen this Affection, which must prepare the way for *Faith in Christ*, which lays the Foundation for all Joy and Peace, I will first shew what this Godly Sorrow doth imply, or what Acts are included in it, if it be such as will work Repentance never to be repented of. And here let me Note, That Repentance is sometimes taken by a *Synecdoche*, for the whole Work of Conversion, and then it includes Faith in it : so it's taken *Luke 15. 7.* — *There shall be joy in Heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons that need no repentance.* So *Luke 13. 3, 5.* *Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish :* where Faith also is implied. So *Acts 11. 18.* — *Then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life :* where Repentance is named as the only condition of Life, which without Faith also in Christ cannot be had, and therefore it is included.

Sometime Repentance is taken only for Contrition, and then usually Faith is joyned with it.

So

So *Acts 20. 21. Testifying to the Jews and also to the Greeks repentance toward God, and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.* And in this latter sense, I here take the word Repentance when I make use of it: And so *Repentance, or Godly Sorrow*, is a deliberate Act of the Soul, performed upon the Motions or by the Assistance of the good Spirit of God, whereby a Man being touched with unfeigned Sorrow and Remorse, for all that he hath sinned, whither in his Parents, or in himself, either inwardly, and in secret, or else openly, and in the sight of Men, is now resolved to close with Christ, as his only Remedy against the Guilt and Power of it. So that you may perceive by this Description, that *sincere Repentance, and Sorrow for Sin*, must imply these following Acts, or otherwise it can never be an advised and deliberate Act, nor conclude in a firm resolution and purpose to take Christ as his only sufficient Saviour.

First, It implies a deep Conviction of the Holiness of God and his sin-hating Nature: And that you may as soon reconcile Light and Darkness, as God and the least Sin, whether you take it in its Material or Formal Consideration: In its Material Consideration, it's nothing but Deformity, and Absurdity, and Contradiction, to all Right and Reason: And in its Formal Respect, it's a thwarting God's Will, (that's supreme, and governed with infinite wisdom) and a breach of his righteous Law: And in both these Respects, it must needs be the Object of Divine Hatred and Abhorrence: surely he must needs abhor to see a Creature cross his own Will, and oppose his own Govern.

Government; and when he hath endued him with reason, to see him act so absurdly: Hence the Psalmist tells us, *That such as are foolish, cannot stand in his sight, he hateth all the workers of iniquity,* Psalm 5. 5. And if an imperfect Saint, such a one as *David*, hath such an aversion to such Works, and the doers of them, that he can say, *depart from me all ye workers of Iniquity*, much more doth he that is of spotless purity, hate all Filthiness and Pollution, which every sinner hath some degree of: If the Lord were not an utter Enemy to all Iniquity, he had never turned so many Angels out of Heaven for their sin, nor prepared such a place of endless and unsufferable Torment, for such as are found guilty of it in the General Account: He had never brought such a Deluge upon the old World, and swept away all of them, save Eight Persons; Nor dropt down such a consuming Fire upon those Four Citys, and the Inhabitants thereof, Man, Woman and Child, if he had not been a bitter Enemy to sin: If you should see a Father that tenderly loves his Children, and bears a most dear Affection to them, to persecute them to the Death, and express the greatest Cruelty towards them: you would surely say, that it must be some high Provocation that can thus prevail to extinguish such inbred natural Affection to them: And if you could be confident that he were a just and righteous Person, that would not do such a cruel Act without a great and weighty Cause; you must then say, That they must be guilty of some horrid Act, that can thus turn the Bowels of such a tender Father, and exasperate them into such a rage. The Case

is the same here, only with this difference, that God hath infinitely more love and tender bowels to us his Creatures and the Workmanship of his Hands, than the tenderest Father or Mother here upon Earth: *Isaiah 49. 15. Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on the son of her womb? yea, they may forget, but I will not forget:* And yet what terrible and remarkable Judgments doth he execute upon some of them, both here and hereafter? Not only single Persons, but whole Nations: yea, how dreadful, and heavy is his hand upon those that are his Children, not only by Creation, but Regeneration also, insomuch that they often complain, that the Arrows of the Almighty stick fast in them, and drink up their Spirits, *Job 6. 4. Thus Job, David, Heman,* and many others of God's dearest Servants have complained: Can any Man of reason ever think, that ever God thus deals with them, without some great and weighty Cause? especially when it is so certain, that Pity dwelleth not in him, *Isaiah 29. 14.* And he cannot be moved by any of those wild, irrational, and ungoverned Passions as Man is: He that believes not this, either believes that there is no God; or else knows not what such a Being doth essentially involve: But yet though we have a fall, certainly that God is more tender and affectionate to Men, than any Father or Mother in the World; yet it is as certain, that he loveth Righteousness, and Equity, and Truth, more than all the Creatures in the World; because these are a part of his own Essence; but Creatures are not: And therefore he stands obliged to vindicate these, though it be with
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the Ruin of all Mankind: And thus he would certainly do, even destroy all the Works of his Hands, if his righteous Law (which is but the Transcript of his Nature, could not be otherwise righted: He can make another World, with a Word of his Mouth: But he cannot make, as I may say, with reverence, another God: Every sin strikes at the very Being of God, and toucheth the very Apple of his Eye; And therefore the Word of God tells us plainly, That Sin is the only Make-bate between God and his Creatures, that hath pull'd down all those heavy Calamities, and Judgments, upon the World, that ever we read or heard of. But the Death of his only Natural Son, for the Sins of the World, which he took upon him to expiate and satisfy for, is such a demonstration of God's deadly and implacable Hatred against all Sin and Ungodliness, that no Man in reason should ever after doubt of it. Every Man that is truly penitent, and sorry for his sin, is apprehensive of this in some good Measure. And this is the *First Act* that Godly Sorrow and Repentance doth imply.

Secondly, He that unfeignedly grieveth for his sin, must be very sensible how dishonourable it is to God: I know it's beyond the reach of any Creature to do him any real Dishonour; But yet doth he not lose his Reputation amongst Men, by every sin that is committed? Are not some or other animated thereby to do the like; or else if it be secretly committed, is not the sinner himself more hardened thereby, and disposed to more perverse, unworthy Apprehensions of God? It is certain he is. He cannot think him so holy, just, and

and righteous as he is, because Judgment is not speedily executed on him: And how doth the Devil triumph, and all those malicious Spirits that attend him, to see a Child so unnatural to his Father, as every sinner is to God? How doth it feed his Malice and Pride, to see him make a Creature that cares so little for him, as every sinner doth? He that is affected with his sin to purpose, knows and is cut to the heart, for the dishonour done to him by his sin, and that he hath so much stained his holy Attributes and Perfections, and misrepresented him to the World.

Thirdly, He that is truly penitent for his sin, is deeply sensible of those great Obligations he lies under, to perform a perfect obedience to God: He is his Creature, I, and the chief of his Creatures in this lower World, made on purpose for his service, shaped in his own likeness, fitted for it, encouraged to it: That can never be happy, but in his Favour, and therefore was sufficiently concerned to seek and prize it above all things: And to shun and avoid sin, whereby he must needs lose it. All Creatures upon Earth were placed at his Feet, and put into his Hands, to give him their best Assistance and Encouragement for this Service. The good and welfare of the whole inferior World depended upon his Obedience to God, and the observance of that Law he had written upon his very Nature: And therefore so soon as ever he sinned, he involved all the Creatures that were made subject to him in the same Curse and Condemnation: so that the whole Creation is now in Bondage, and groans to be delivered into the glorious Liberty of God's Children:

And

And the earnest expectation of the Creature waiteth for the manifestation of the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 19, 21, 22. Never was any Child so much obliged to observe the Will of his Father, Nor any Subject to Obey his rightful Prince and Sovereign, Nor any Slave and Vassal to fulfil the Command of his Lord, as we are to do the Will of our Creatour: But what do I make such a Comparison as this? There's a thousand fold more obligation upon us to render a perfect Obedience to God, than there can be upon any Subject, or Child, or Servant, to obey the strictest Laws of the best Father, Lord or Sovereign here on Earth: And yet what Man so mad, as to incur their displeasure, if they can help it? Or who would not wash away such an Offence with many Tears, if there were any hope to find Mercy and Favour with them in such a Case: How much more would a sinner bewail his Offences committed against him that is his Creatour, and Sovereign, and hath absolute dominion over him, and the power of Eternal Life and Death in his hands; Thou canst not endure his displeasure, if he doth but frown: Nor live without his favour, if he should totally withdraw it but an hour: As he commandeth the Sun to shed his light and influence upon thee, so he clotheth the Heaven with blackness, and maketh Sackcloth their covering when he pleaseth, *Isaiah 50. 3.* If thou didst but know and consider the one half of the infinite Mercies he doth bestow upon thee, and the worth of them, it would make thee sure to break into bitter complaints, for all thy odious Transgressions, especially when thou knowest beforehand, That the Penitent are so sure to speed, and find Mercy with him.

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This is a *Third Act*, That Godly Sorrow, if it be sincere, doth imply, even a deep sense of all the Obligations every one of us lies under to abstain from all Appearance of Evil.

Fourthly, He that would bewail his sin aright, must be sensible how shameful it is and destructive to his own Soul and Body : It prevents his Reason, and makes him far more vile than a Creature that wants that Faculty ; It animates his Senses to all insolency ; it makes his Passions masterless and unruly ; it destroys the Health of the Body, the Peace and Composure of the Mind ; it fills the Conscience with perpetual Remorse and Unquietness ; And all these Effects do as naturally flow from it, as Poyson doth from a Toad or Serpent ; And thus it would punish it self, although God should inflict no other punishment than what will inevitably follow such sinful, inordinate Acts, and such abuse of the Reason and Faculties that Man is possessed of. It procures the hatred of God, and the shame of Men, and breeds a continual Worm at home, that will gnaw intwain the Thred of this Life, and will then feed upon Soul and Body, to their everlasting pain and torment hereafter.

Fifthly, He that is truly penitent, and doth lament his sin, as he ought, doth know and consider the Merit of his sin, and what Wages it deserves : He is sensible that the least sin committed against such a Majesty, by a Creature so much obliged and enabled to the contrary, deserves damnation, and that he can make God no recompence for the wrong and injury it doth him. And he understands in some good measure, what Eternal Dam-

nation doth imply: And then when he calls to mind the infinite Number he hath committed, and how oft he hath deserved such a dreadful Reward, and that yet he is invited to Repentance, and knows that he shall find Mercy, if he repent from the bottom of his Heart; This melts him into Tears, and dissolveth his rocky Heart, and maketh it to feel, what heretofore he made light matter of.

Sixthly, As the penitent sinner is sensible of all the foregoing Particulars, so he is acquainted with his own personal Transgressions; not only that he is a sinner in general, but what actual wickedness he is every day guilty of. How little his Thoughts, Words or Actions come up to the Rule at the best, and how often they utterly thwart and contradict the Rule, and what are his Master-Corruptions, and where the strength of his sin lies; He is also deeply sensible of his sinful Nature, that he brought with him into the World; and how cross it is to the Will of God expressed in his Word and Law, and altogether unlike the Nature that God gave Man at the first.

Seventhly, He doth hereupon judge himself exceeding vile, and even loath himself for his Abominations, *Ezek. 36. 31.* When he thinketh upon his odious ways, he is heartily ashamed, and counteth himself unworthy of any outward Mercy, and wondreth at the Mercies that God doth bestow so contrary to his deserts. He seriously judgeth himself more wretched and miserable, by reason of his sin, and an Object of greater shame and contempt, than if he had liv'd in the greatest poverty and want without sin; as knowing that
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one makes him contemptible only to such as judge according to outward appearance, but the other to those that judge righteous judgment. He knows, that sin makes him a Beast or a Devil in Humane shape, and is a Disgrace and Reproach to all his Faculties, and quite perverts the very frame and design of them. For what is sin, but an absurd and unreasonable Act? (*Actus debito ordine privatus*,) as the School-men define it, and supposeth the Senses and their Objects to be in chief power and command, and the nobler Part, (I mean his Rational and Immortal Spirit) to be chained up, and lye by as a Prisoner in Fetters, or which is worse, to be a voluntary Servant and Drudge, to the stinking corruptible part of Man: What Lord, that hath the Spirit of a Man, would endure to be a drudge to his Servant? It's a sad sight to see a Prince a Captive to his Subjects, or a Lord to be in the hand and power of his Slaves, led up and down in Chains at the will and pleasure of him, that is but of a base and degenerate Breed, compared with himself. It was a great aggravation of *Job's* pitiful Condition, that contemptible persons had him in derision, whose Fathers he would have disdained to have set with the Doggs of his Flock, *Job* 30. 1. That Children of Fools and Base Men, that were viler than the Earth, made him their Song, and By-word, and that they did abhor him, and flee far from him, and not spare to spit in his Face, *vers.* 8, 9, 10. It was a very doleful, pitiful sight, to see *Edward the Second*, so barbarously entreated by *Gourney*, and made to sit upon a Mole-hill, whilst the Barber shaved him, and to take cold Water out of a

Ditch, to wash him with ; which the patient King seeing, told them, that in despite of them, he would have warm Water at his Barbing, and therewithal poured down Tears in abundance : It's a much sadder Spectacle, to see Sense trample upon Reason, and the Flesh that is of so base a descent, to domineer over the Soul, that's born of God, and is of the Blood-Royal, made to rule and govern, as the very *Heathen* could tell : *Ani-mi imperio, Corporis servitio, utimur*, saith *Salast*. And what's the Fruit of such a Monstrous Disorder, when Flesh and Sense do exercise such an oppressive usurping Power, and that Faculty that makes a Man is perfectly cow'd ? Why, This unspeakable Mischiefe is the Fruit thereof ; Earth is preferr'd before Heaven ; The Creature before the Creator ; The momentary pleasures of Sin, before the durable and everlasting Felicity ; And Men chuse rather to be Termers in these decaying Comforts, that expire with their Lives, than to have the Propriety of an Eternal Inheritance hereafter, that shall never be out-dated : These and the like Considerations make the sinner to judge himself a vile Person, a Reproach to Humane Nature, a shameful Spectacle to God, Angels and Men ; Better he judgeth it a thousand times, that God had made him a Beast, rather than that he should have made himself a Beast : If you judge not Sin to be the greatest evil to you, and a greater disparagement than Poverty and Raggs, and all the reproach and scorn of Men barely considered in themselves without sin, you cannot have that sorrow for sin which is sincere ; For it's absolutely necessary that sorrow for sin, committed
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against God, be greater than all other sorrow for worldly Calamities whatsoever, (as to the rational part of it, which is in the Intellect and Will, though perchance not as to that part of sorrow which is in the sensitive part, and is it may be expressed in Tears, or those sensible Perturbations of the Body which we usually call by the Name of Passions:) And how is it possible that there should be an intellectual sorrow greater than all other sorrow, unless it be first truly judged to be the greatest disgrace and shame to us of any thing that can befall us, and doth necessarily draw after it more evil and mischief to Body and Soul, than the World can inflict on us? It's possible for a Man to have great inward Peace and Content, and an excellent Spirit, that is the object of the World's contempt and scorn: Our Saviour had no Form nor Comeliness in him, saith the Prophet *Isaiah*, *ch. 53. 2.* And yet he was *speciosus præ Filiis hominum*; Fairer than the Children of Men: (1.) for internal, but not external Endowments, saith the Prophet *David*, *Psal. 45. 2.* And as the sinner that's wounded with hearty sorrow for his sin, doth thus judge of himself and doth say, He is a Worm and no Man, a Reproach of Men, and worthily despised by the People, *Psal. 22. 6.* So he doth adjudge himself to the greatest sufferings, and counts it an unspeakable Favour to be admitted to Repentance, and that he may be received into Favour with God again upon any Terms: This is *Another Act* that Godly Sorrow doth contain and is made up of.

Eighthly, The Soul that's truly penitent, is deeply displeased with himself, and witheth heartily he had never been guilty of such Folly: And if it were to do again, would venture upon any suffering or shame, rather than give his Consent thereto; He is fallen out with himself so far as he is tainted with Corruption, and upbraids himself with all his Rebellion and Ingratitude against God, and his unrighteous and unbrotherly Practices towards Men, and ill Government of himself; He is heartily willing to grieve for his Sin, and to express that grief by all significant signs that either Nature or Scripture doth suggest to him, and to use all Means whereby this Grief may be procured, as by Fasting, and hard Usage of his Body, when it may be a probable Means to promote this Repentance of his Heart. Whatever is like to make his Heart more Tender and Sensible of his Sin he is willing to submit to. He is willing to take a frequent view of his loathsome sin, that he might more deeply abhor himself. He is willing that God should afflict him in that measure that his Wisdom sees most fit, if he will but kill his Corruptions thereby. And that Men think of him as he hath deserved; And when he cannot weep in reality, he weepeth in desire.

Ninthly, And as the Understanding and Will do thus far conquer to produce this Repentance and Sorrow; so there will be some degree and measure of the Passions, properly so called, stirring in such a true Penitent. There will be Grief, and Shame for the Offence, and Fear of him whom thou hast offended, and longing desire to be reconciled.

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And then Tenthly, He that hath a truly penitent Heart, and the Sorrow of the right stamp, will expresse it by all outward Signs for the Honour of God and the Good of others; He will accuse and speak evil of himself, and humble himself by Confession before God, his shameful Iniquities; Neither will he spare to lay open the shame of his particular sins, so far as he knoweth them: Nay, his pride is so far taken down, that he will not stick to make Confession of them before Men, if it be such sins whereby they have wronged their Souls, and hardned them in any sinful course; They will endeavour to undo what they have done, by their penitent Confessions; and remove the scandal, as much as lyeth in their power, though it cost them shame: It's a good sign that their sorrow for sin is sincere, when it puts them upon such outward Acts, as have a strong tendency to condemn and disgrace their former sinful Courses: And they may well suspect themselves and their Repentance, that stick at such disgraceful Acts as Confession is: And are content that God should want the Honour that's given to him, by an humble acknowledgment of our vileness and particular sins; And that Men should want, such an Argument, against the like sinful Courses for the time to come, than that themselves should undergo a little disgrace and shame: I say, not that sins of a fouler nature, that would tend to the disparagement of the Gospel, that were committed in secret, should be publicly made known at all: It may suffice, that such are confessed before God, and the Persons that are already privy to them: And that we do protest to them our unfeigned

Grief for such foul Transgressions, and our readiness to give them all satisfaction for any Wrong or Injury done them. But the wrong that we have done to our Associates and Companions, by profanation of the Sabbath, Oaths, Ribbaldry, or any other infectious Courses we are to beg pardon for, of them whom we have thus wronged, by our Miscarriages; And to confess the sinfulness of such Courses, to the Glory of God, and to the preventing of such Evil for the future: And as the penitent, humble Person, will not stick at Confession, both to God, and Men, when need requireth; so he will with patience and silence submit himself to any Afflictions that the righteous God, whom he hath provoked, doth think meet to inflict upon him: He doth not mutter in his Heart, as knowing, that he hath deserved the most calamitous afflicted Life in this World, and the unsupportable Miseries of the other Life: Should a Malefactor, that hath forfeited his Life, murmur at the Judge that punisheth him with a few stripes, and so remits the other part of his punishment? *I will patiently bear the indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, saith the Church, Micah 7. 9. A truly penitent Heart will not complain for the punishment of his sin, Lam. 3. 39.* What do I say, he will not complain? Nay, he will justify God in all that he brings upon him: And as he doth express his Sorrow by humble Confession of his Sins, and Justification of his Judge, so he will do it by penitential Tears, if the Temper and Constitution of his Body will yield them. I do not say, that Tears are always an inseparable Concomitant of Repentance;

tance ; But unfeigned sorrow for sin, if it be in that degree, that our sin requireth, will for the most part produce Tears : What a Flood did St. *Austin* pour forth at his first Conversion ? The story is very remarkable, you may find it in his Confessions : After he had struggled with himself a good while, and had met with stiff opposition from the World and the Flesh, with the Lusts thereof, that he was given to, which were still tugging and drawing to keep their hold of him ; But the good Man knowing that they would prove his utter destruction, if they were not forsaken, prayed earnestly to God, to deliver him from their Bondage ; And hearing by *Pontition*, a Christian Courtier, of the virtuous Life of St. *Anthony*, a Man of little Learning, but of strict and exemplary Piety, began to be more enflamed with a desire after Conversion : And walking in a Garden, with his Friend *Alipius*, he cries out to him, *Quid hoc est ? Quid patimur ? Sargunt indocti, &c.* (1.) What's the Matter ? What unhappy Men are we ? Poor, simple, illiterate Men, Rise up, and get the Kingdom of Heaven by force, and we with all our Learning, wallow in the Mire of Lust and Corruption. Afterwards, going forth into an Orchard, all his former pleasures mustered up, and seemed to present themselves before his Eyes ; and thus to set upon him, *Dimitteſne nos, & a momento isto, &c.* What wilt thou leave us quite, And must we never after this time see thee any more ? What filth, saith he, and shameful pleasures did they lay before mine Eyes, which he entreated God to pardon : At length, after a tedious difficult Conflict, a marvellous Tempest of
Tears

Tears came upon him, and Rivers of Water ran down his Eyes, as he lay under a Figg-tree, and there he poured forth his Soul to God, and prevailed, and threw off his beloved Lusts and Corruptions, and never returned to them any more :

All these Acts must concur, where there is true sorrow for sin, such as the Gospel doth require as a condition, without which there can be no forgiveness: though perchance every one of these distinct Acts may not be taken notice of by him that is sincerely penitent, yet he feeleth the force and power of them in his afflicted broken Heart. But yet some of the forgoing Acts that are in the understanding, it may be, stick closer than the others, and prevail more to bring on the after Acts that are in the Will and Affections, and are expressed in the outward Actions: But though some degrees of this forementioned Sorrow may and do always go before *Faith in Christ*, yet your Repentance is never compleated and perfected, till Christ be heartily closed with, and received with loving subjection of the Soul; for then the Soul is enabled by the Spirit, that he bestoweth to *bring forth* that Repentance which it had *brought but to the Birth* before: There must be some sense of the evil of sin, and fear of God's displeasure, and the miseries that it already hath and will moreover bring upon us, and some loathing of a Man's self, before ever Christ will be welcome to you, and before you will consent that he shall be your Sovereign Lord and Saviour; and take his Yoke on you: You must feel the intolerableness of the other Yoke of Sin and Satan, before you will
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change it for Christ's, and come to him for ease and Relief. So that you see some Acts of Repentance are preparatory to Faith, (*viz.*) Such as Self-love and the Fear of Hell and Damnation can produce: But it is the Love of God in Christ that must kindly melt the Heart for sin, and antidote it against the poyson thereof for the future, and settle the Resolution to forsake it, and follow after holiness, whereby the soul is made like to God.

So much for the Nature of Repentance, or what Acts it is made up of. I come next to the *Considerations* that should provoke and stir up this Holy Affection.

First then; Consider the flat necessity of Repentance, without which there is no Pardon, nor Peace with God to be expected: whatever he dispense withal, this he will not dispense with: He hath indeed dispensed with the Law of Works that required perfect sinless Obedience, or threatened Damnation: And hath promised thee, that thou shalt not dye, nor the threatning be executed on thee, if thou wilt submit to the Gospel, or the New Law of Christ thy Redeemer: That is, in other words, if thou wilt from thy Heart acknowledge thy sins and repent of them, and come to Christ for strength and resolution to forsake them: But he will never dispense with thee here, in case thou wilt not submit to this gracious offer: Thy sins must be felt, and that more than all worldly sufferings, otherwise Christ will be no Physician to thee, nor shalt thou ever feel the admirable power of his Blood: Thy sin must be felt either
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here by Repentance, or else hereafter in eternal Desparation : Now the stain and filthiness of thy most hainous sins, may be washed out by the Blood of Christ, if thou comest with a penitent Heart to that sovereign, healing Fountain : But then the stain can never be got out, nor thy reproach be ever wiped away, though thou shouldst pour forth Rivers of Tears : Behold, I have foretold thee, Let not thy Heart deceive thee, nor think that after thou hast displeased God so often by thy sin, that thou mayest scape and find Mercy, though thou art never heartily displeased with thy self for thy foolish, shameful ways : Never any person found favour with God, nor obtained Mercy, that did not drink of this bitter Potion of Repentance, and was not more afflicted in Heart and Soul for Disobedience to God, than for any worldly Misery that ever beset him : It is an unpleasant work to a Man yet in his sins, and a narrow passage unto life, but he that will enter into the Heavenly Kingdom, must pass through this streight Gate : The bitterness of this Repentance will quickly be over, but the unspeakable comfort thereof (if it be sound, and enable thee to forsake thy sins) will abide with thee for ever : Who would not submit to hard Terms, to save his Estate, (though it were never so little) or his Life, though it were unhealthy and uncomfortable ? But who would not consent to harder Terms, to procure a more plentiful Estate, and a more healthful, comfortable Life ? And is there any thing more necessary, or doth half so much concern thee, as to have God thy reconciled Friend, and to save thy Soul from Eternal Death, and thy self from
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utter destruction of Body and Soul for ever and ever? And to get the possession of Eternal Life and Joy? Consider, I beseech, O my Soul! And do not reject the offer of Repentance, lest the refusal cost thee a Repentance a thousand times more sharp and bitter: The pangs of the New Birth will quickly end, and then thou wilt begin to rejoice, that a Soul is born into the Spiritual World: And then thou wilt forget all thy former Sighs and Groans and Fears, and the bitter Agonies of thy Soul, because God hath now answered thee in the joy of thy Heart; And taken thee into his special care, and pardoned all thy sin, *Eccles.* 5. 20. Or if thou beest one that hath pass'd the New Birth already, thy speedy repentance after sin committed, will be like a Shower in Summer, after the Ground is parched with heat and drought. The Winter-Rain, though the Ground be well soaked therewith, may indeed prepare the Earth to bring forth its Increase, which Men expect from it in Summer and Harvest; But if there fall not some Showers now and then, especially after violent hot Seasons, all the hopes of a good Harvest, may come to nought: So it is in the Case of sin: your first Repentance and Tears, are like the Winter-Rain, that is of long continuance, and doth thoroughly soak into the Heart, and make it soft and fertile: But your after-Repentance is like the Summer-Showers, and the more the heat is parched with sin, and hardened through the Sunshine of Prosperity, the more it must be watered, with fresh Showers of Holy Repentance and Sorrow, or else you will lose your hopes of Future Joy and Happiness: Seeing then the Necessity of
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a first and after Repentance, refuse not the Mercy that's offered to thee upon such fair Terms: For shame disown that Faculty of Sorrow and Weeping, if it will not serve thee, and stand thee in stead in this greatest Necessity: Shall thine Eyes trickle, and run down with Tears, if thou hast but lost a dear Friend and Acquaintance? Yea, if thou hast but parted with him for a time, and hast not quite lost him, or her? And shall not thy Heart melt, and thine Eyes pour down, when God is departed from thee, though it should be but for a certain time, Alas! thou wantest him every Moment, more than thou canst do the most useful, helpful Friend, that ever thou hadst in the World: And if thou knowest not thus much, the greater is thy need of repentance and sorrow, for such a wicked, deadly ignorance, as this will prove, if the Tears of Repentance do not clear thine Eyes, and cause thee better to see and understand what need thou hast of the Divine Grace and Comfort every hour: And then thou wilt be as ready to say, as *David, I am poor and needy, make hast unto me, O God; Thou art my help, and my deliverer: make no long tarrying, O my God, Psalm 70. 5.* And when thou hast well considered, and had a little more experience, thou wilt say as he did, *Unless the Lord had been my help, my soul had long since dwelt in silence, (1) death, Psalm 94. 17.* It's easie to see if thou regardest either Scripture or Experience; *That in the multitude of thy troublesome thoughts within, he only can comfort and rejoyce thy soul, Psalm 94. 19.* If thou canst not therefore weep in the want and absence of him, better thou hadst had no Eyes, nor a Faculty to sigh or weep: Yea, the
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very Children of the Bride-chamber, though they have no need to weep whilst the Bride-groom is with them, (that is) whilst they feel the effects of God's gracious Presence and Favour: yet when the Bride-groom is gone from them, and driven away by some sinful, unkind usage, in these days they must mourn, or the Comforter will not return again. How much more must they weep, that are none of the Children of the Bride-chamber, that never yet repented in all their life? Well, there is no Remedy, *Except you repent, you will certainly perish*, Luke 13. 3, 5. This is the *First Consideration*, to provoke Repentance and to stir up this Affection.

Secondly, Consider how foolishly thou hast done, and then refrain thy deepest Sorrow and Tears, if thou art able: This Consideration stirr'd up David's repentance, after that carnal confidence and distrust of God, he had been guilty of, in numbring the People: 2 Sam. 24. 10. *And David's heart smote him, after he had numbred the People; And David said unto the Lord, I have sinned greatly in that I have done: And now I beseech thee, O Lord, take away the iniquity of thy servant; for I have done very foolishly.* Is it not a ridiculous, foolish Act, to set our strength and wit against him that made us? For the Stubble to quarrel with the Fire? And the Dust to fight against the Wind, that scattereth it on the Face of the Earth? 'Tis just such a piece of wisdom, to provoke God wilfully, And when he calls, to give him no answer: And when he hath given us a Law to direct us how to live; Never seriously to enquire what it is, nor to trouble our selves with such Thoughts:

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If an Earthly Master should command his Servant, to do any thing that were just and reasonable, and he should peremptorily refuse to do it; you would call that plain Rebellion, and say that Servant deserves to be used accordingly: And is it much better, do you think, if he should send him Instructions written in black and white, what he would have him do; And he should let them lye by, and never read them? Wilful ignorance, of what we may, and are bound to know, lives at next door, to direct and open Contradiction and Rebellion: Now judge whether that Man be not void of understanding, or stark mad, That dare stand up and contradict, and say he will not obey, when God commands him: I know there's not a Man believes there is a God, and knows what he is, that dares say plainly, as *Pharaoh* did, *Who is the Lord, that I should obey him?* Exod. 5. 2. But are there not many thousands that will go their ways, and never consider or regard what God commands them? I would it were not a very common Case: And Mens ordinary course in the World: And what's the reason that Men are so exceeding bold and adventurous? The plain reason is, *because they are foolish Children and have no knowledge; they are sottish, and have no understanding,* Jer. 4. 22. And yet it follows, *They are wise enough to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge:* What canst thou say for thy self, that art yet an impenitent wretch? If thou art one that dost believe thou hast a Soul to save, and a God to serve, and that the Day is coming when thou must account for these things, and yet regardest them not, will not thy Tongue be forced to say,
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thou hast done very foolishly? Is he not a Fool that neglects his greatest Concernments, and spendeth all his Time without any Thoughts of them? Suppose a Merchant should send a Factor into a far Countrey, to negotiate his Affairs, and transact his Business there, and to carry on his Trade with the Inhabitants of that Countrey; and there should live gallantly upon the Cost and Expences of his Master that sent him: and when he should return home, should bring in his Accounts, So much spent in Meat and Drink, so much in Apparel, so much in Entertainments, and other Recreations; and when he came to the main point in hand, the Business on which he was purposely sent, could give none, or but a slight and careless Account thereof, would you not account him a foolish Factor, and that Merchant a worse Fool, that should imploy such a one again, without any Signs of Repentance, and hopes of his Amendment? Shall I liken their Folly to this, (yea, it is incomparably greater) that come hither into the World on purpose to serve their Maker, and live in obedience to his Laws, and yet do nothing less: Should God call thee now to an account, Is it not the plain truth, that thy Thoughts have been upon this Vanity and that Vanity; And thine Affections have run after every Shadow; And thy time hath been spent in the drudgery of the Flesh, in providing for thy Carcass; And the main Design upon which thou art sent into the World, shamefully neglected? I know it is duty to think upon, and labour after Temporal things, *and in the sweat of thy face, to eat thy bread*, Gen. 3. 19. But is it not damnable Folly,

to labour after the Food that perissheth, more than that which endureth? To spend thy days in sinful, foolish Merriment, and then to go down to the place of Eternal Misery? Can that Man go for any other than a Fool, in thine account, that will not be perswaded to consider, that for his good now, which he must unavoidably consider to his hurt and mischief hereafter? It's one known difference between a Wiseman and a Fool, that the one provideth for a Mischief while time serveth; and the other would do it when it is too late: And it is another undoubted Character of a Fool, to prefer the chasing of a Feather, before the lading of himself with the richest Treasure: such a Fool is every sinner that wilfully displeaseth God, to satisfy a vain and inordinate desire: And therefore what more common in the Scripture, than to find Folly put for Sin, and the Sinner for a Fool? It's needless to cite places in a Case so known and obvious: Now consider, how oft hast thou thus play'd the Fool? And is it not time to return to thy Wits again? How much hath sin befooled their understandings, that refuse a little pains, and self-denial, to get the Everlasting Crown and Kingdom? Much more that take so much pains to get into the place of Torment and Misery, as some will undergo? Will not the Toyl that some Worldlings will dispense with, to get a little Worldly Treasure, convince the one of Folly? And the shifts that Men will use to escape a Temporal Misery, rise up and condemn the other of stark Madnes? We see Men rip up the Bowels of the Earth, and dig into the Entrails of craggy Rocks, and take incredible pains, to get a little Silver,

Silver, and Gold : They will break their sweetest sleep, to accomplish an ambitious desire ; They will spend their Patrimony, their Credit, their Bodies, and their very Souls, for a drop of Swinish Pleasure, and Carnal Delight. What's the matter, that we cannot be content to spend a few earnest Thoughts, to use a little serious Diligence, for the purchase of so great a Glory as Christ doth promise to his Servants, for the Riches of Heaven ; For the Promises of this Life, and that which is to come, for a Dignity not inferiour to Angels ; for a Sea of Delights and Pleasures, that ravish the Heart of God himself ? Alas ! we are surely ignorant of the Pleasures which our Lord calleth us to, or else we are Fools indeed to stop our Ears : Our carnal besotted Hearts imagine that there is nothing better, than to eat and to drink, and to satiate the Body with that which tickleth the Senses : Certainly if Men did believe, that the Joyes of Heaven, are as far beyond all the Happiness of this Life, as Heaven is beyond Earth, they could not, they would not forsake the Service of Christ, for some little discouragements as sometimes they must meet with : Let such faint-hearted Cowards as these, remember what Sufferings Christ himself underwent, and Contradiction of Sinners he endured, that they may not be weary, and faint in their minds, *Heb. 12. 3.* And let me say to such, as Christ said of himself, in another Case, to his yet ignorant Disciples, *O Fools and slow of Heart to (understand) and believe, ought not you (cheerfully) to suffer these things, and to enter into glory, Luke 24. 24, 25.* And for the other sort, that take so much pains to undo them-

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selves. Let me but appeal to their own Judgments, and ask them, whether it is not palpable Folly to refuse to do that; for to make themselves everlastingly happy, which they will not refuse to do, to make themselves eternally miserable? *Ob.* But they will say, They intend it not; They think to make themselves happy, by such Toil and Pains. *An.* You much mend the matter, by this Objection, and wipe off the Asperion: For if thou art not a Fool the one way, thou art another; Canst thou imagine, (unless thou wert guilty of this Accusation) that to rise up early, and sit up late, and eat the Bread of Carefulness, to get a little more of the World, and the Pleasures of the Flesh, (when God's Service is neglected) is the way to make thy self happy? Thou couldst not think thus, if thou wert not ignorant, and wholly bereft of thine understanding: Consider therefore before it be too late, what Folly thou hast been guilty of, in forsaking God, and following the ways of thine own Heart; And humble thy self at last, and pour forth thy Tears before God, in the sence of thy foolish, sinful disobedience; And lift up thy broken Heart to him for Pardon in the Name of thy Redeemer: And this is the way to recover thy Wits again, and to come to thy self, as the Prodigal did, when he returned to his Father, and confessed his sin.

Thirdly, Consider, There is no spark of true Ingenuity left in that Heart, that refuseth to lay to Heart the Transgressions he hath committed against God: Doth not thy Heart smite thee, and tell thee how shamefully thou hast done in pro-
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voking him, to whom thou art so wonderfully indebted? Doth not thy Heart bleed at all, for the Wounds and Dishonour thou hast done to his Name? Nor is it a burthen to thy Soul, that thou hast wearied him with thy rebellions, and made him to serve with thy sins? *Isaiah* 43. 24. Doth it seem a small matter to thee; that thou hast slighted his Word, neglected his Service, profaned his Sabbaths, despised the offers of his Grace, taken part with his Enemies, and preferred every foolish Delight, before his Love and and Favour? Be it known to thee, thou art of a base and sordid disposition, and utterly forsaken of all Reason and Ingenuity: God deals not with Men in a way of Violence and Constraint; He could easily force thee to an Acknowledgment of thy Pride, and Worldliness, and filthy Lusts, which thou doest so carefully conceal, and the hainous dishonour thou hast done to his Name; He could make thine own Conscience fall upon thee and condemn thee, in despite of thee, and thy Tongue to fall upon thy self: But he loves to deal with every Creature according to the Nature he hath given them: He leaves thee to thine own choice, having given thee Reason to discern what is fittest to be done, and his infallible Word, to guide thee: He useth Arguments to perswade, rather than Power to compel, and draws thee with Cords of a Man, (as the Prophet expresseth it) *Hosea* 11. 4. That if Love and Ingenuity will not prevail with thee, to do thy Duty to him, Shame and Ingenuity might perswade thee to repent thee of the Folly: There is some ingenuity, in a free and open confession of thy sin, and a

proportionable sorrow for it, and endeavour to vindicate the Name of God, which thou hast dishonoured, after thou hast been so disingenious to dishonour him by thy Transgressions: He that can harden himself against his dearest Friend, and blot his precious Name with any foul Aspersions, and then justify and defend what he hath done, or at least manifest himself to be altogether insensible of such behaviour, deserves to be thrust out of the Society of Men: And all Men would take him for a Monster, and degenerate piece of Humanity: But it's a thousand times worse to play such Tricks with God, who will lay them to Heart, and not let them go unpunished: And when he sees thou art past all Ingenuity, and hast out grown the Heart of a Man, and there is nothing to be done with thee, without stripes and blows, he will deal with thee, as Masters use to deal with a Scholar, that will no longer be moved by any other Arguments, make them the common whipping-Blocks of the School, that by their just punishment, the other that have some ingenuity still left, may take warning: or else turn such untractable Disciples quite out of their Tuition: O, my Brethren, your Case would be sad indeed, if it should once come to any of these: The

Q. Curt. Heathen could say, *Illius ego perisse dico cui perit pudor*: He that hath lost all shame, is utterly lost. And he that hath lost all ingenuity, is quite shameless. I beseech you look into your Hearts, and search; Can you find no Motions to Sorrow, and Complaints, and bitterness of Spirit, for all those Hours you have foolishly spent in the Service of the Flesh, or the World,

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and the Devil, which are the professed Enemies of him who is your greatest Friend? Surely you cannot reflect upon those rebellious, sinful Courses you have taken, and not be moved with indignation against your corrupt Inclinations, that have so much seduced you: Surely you can never be vile enough in your own Eyes, that have so much vilified and despised the just Commands of him that holdeth your Soul in life, and keepeth you every moment: If you are past all sorrow for sin, you are past all hope, and are become like a broken Vessel, that can never be made up again: *Peter* indeed was so disingenuous, to deny his dearest Master, the effect of whose sweetest Love he had so often tasted: But it was when he was in a fright and passion: He no sooner thought upon his odious disingenuity, but the poor Man melts into Tears, and weeps bitterly: There's no sin but is curable, but this of Final Impenitance and Unbelief. It's possible, that though seven Devils have got possession of thee, they may be cast out: It was *Mary Magdalen's* case, and she yet found mercy with the Lord; but then remember how she wept, and wiped the very Feet of Christ with the Hair of her Head, *Luke 7. 44.* But if thou want Tears for thy sin, and a penitent, bleeding Heart for thine iniquities, thy case is a thousand times worse, than if thou hadst the greatest sins, and yet couldst bewail them, and humble thy self for them: For this would shew, that there is some ingenuity left in thee, which the Lord loveth, where ever he sees it; And will not let the person perish, that confesseth from his heart, that he hath deserved to perish, and is afflicted for what he hath done.

Fourthly, Consider, there's no Evil or Misery whatsoever calls for Grief and Sorrow so much as Sin doth : And yet we can weep our Eyes out, almost, for some petty Evils and Miseries that sometimings do afflict us : What an absurd and preposterous sorrow is it to cry for the death of a Friend, to howl for the loss of a Child, and to be overwhelmed with grief, when an intimate, dear Acquaintance is snatch'd away from thee? And yet to be heart-whole, when God is provoked to depart from thee, and thou art in danger to lose thy Soul : We take the Person for a Child or a Fool, that whines and makes a stir for a Trifle, and makes sad Complaints for a Scratch, or a Flea-bite, and is little or no whit moved for the loss of his Credit or good Name, or something that's far better ; This, as well as all other Passions in Man, should be governed by Reason, otherwise they are no more regardable than the howling of a Dog ; And how is that Passion guided by Reason, that makes a great Noise, and is moved with much Violence for a Matter of nothing ; and is very quiet when it hath much more cause to be moved : Is that a rational sorrow, or doth become a Creature that hath understanding, that brings a Man down even to death's-door, for the departure of some worldly comfort, and leaves him without Tears and Sighs, when he is losing that which is a thousand times more desirable? Understand thy self aright, and thou wilt be ashamed of such a ridiculous sorrow as this : Sin is the cause of all other Evil that comes upon thee, and therefore must needs be far worse it self, and much more to be lamented ; It takes away thy Friend from thy
side,

side, thy Child from thy bosom ; It bereaves thee of thy Health, deprives thee of thy Credit and Estate ; It parts between thy Soul and Body, and makes the most lamentable divorce of all between God and thy Soul : *As I live (saith the Lord) though the Son of Jehoiakim, King of Judah, were the Signet upon my right hand, yet would I pluck him thence,* Jerem. 22. 24. And why is this, but because he had provoked God by his sin : It is sin that is our greatest Enemy : It's our Comfort against all other Enemies, that they can pursue us no further than the Grave, *and there the weary be at rest,* Job 3. 17. There we shall feel our worldly troubles no longer ; But this Enemy begins then to rage most, when all other Cruelties cease : Then it comes upon us like a Tempest ; It follows us beyond the Grave, and will never leave us, till it hath compleated our Misery, and put us beyond all hope : And shall this trouble us no more ? Well might our Saviour bid the Daughters of *Jerusalem*, not to weep for him, but for themselves, and for their sins, *Luke 23. 28.* They had some womanish Tears to command, when they saw him led away to Execution, but might have shed them far more acceptably for their sins, where-by they had brought such a horrid thing to pass : It's a lamentable sight, to see Men endued with reason, to ring their hands, and weep, for almost nothing, and to be cruelly hard-hearted when they have the greatest cause to weep : What a vast difference is there, between a little bodily suffering, and the intolerable pains of thy Soul ? between a little Scratch in thy Flesh, and the Wounds of thy Spirit ? *A wounded Spirit, who can bear ?* saith Solo-

Solomon, Prov. 18. 14. Shewing by this Question, the incomparable difference between all external griefs, and those which are internal, and seated in the Spirit: What a wide difference is there between the loss of some temporal finite good, and the loss of that which is infinite and eternal? Thou mayest repair the one, but thou canst never repair the other: It's far more tolerable to be scorned by Men, than to be condemned by God; To be slighted by thy Friends and Acquaintance, when thou art in misery and distress, and dost expect some pity and relief from them, than that God should laugh at thy Calamity, and mock when thy Fear cometh: And yet in such like cases as these, we want no sorrow, but have Tears and Sighs and bitter Expostulations at command: O Sirs, stop your Tears, cease your Complaints, forbear your Sighs, when it is but the Flesh, or outward Man, that is concerned; Keep these in store, for your outward sins, which far better deserve them, and do you a thousand times more wrong;

Noti tristari, nisi quam male feceris.

Keep them in store, for a time of greater Necessity; *The Spirit of the World worketh Death,* 2 Cor. 7. 18. These Tears give your Heart no ease, but rather make way for greater sorrow; The time is coming when you will wish you could have slighted all other Evils, but that of sin.

Fifthly,

Fifthly, Consider, This is one great End for which Christ shed his Blood, and suffered the shameful Death upon the Cross, that he might bring Sinners to Repentance; He knew they could never be happy, till they should get a true sight of the Sin and Misery, and till their Hearts were thoroughly broken for their Transgressions; And that they must part with their Corruptions, or part with God: Being therefore moved with wonderful pity and compassion towards them, and loth that they should go on and perish in their Rebellion against God, hath undertook to bring them to Repentance: If the work could have been done by him alone, it would have been a matter of far less difficulty to effect and bring to pass; But he well knew, before he began to make the least attempt, that it was a far easier task to shed his blood, and satisfy for his sins past, than to bring us to future obedience: If it had been only to lay down his Life for us, so great was his compassion to us, that he could easily have parted with it; But this was not all, no, nor the one half; He had a worse work to do, the stubborn, rebellious Heart of Man, to change and to renew; He must be brought to see and confess and renounce his sins, and come again and submit himself to his Maker, whom he had provoked, or else his Blood would be spilt in vain: O my Brethren, this was a work indeed, and sets forth the wonderful amazing Love of our Redeemer, that he would undertake such a Task as this! If he had had no more to do, but to fulfil the Law of God in his own Person and our Nature, and to have fought with the Devil, and Death,

Death, and to have laid down his Life for us; he
 could have conquered these with a far less power,
 than he could have conquered the rebellious, un-
 tractable Hearts of sinners: It was much easier
 for him to have confounded all the Powers of
 Hell and Darkness, than to break in pieces a
 stony, senseless Heart, and to bring a sinner to Re-
 pentance and Reformation: But yet he hath un-
 dertook the work notwithstanding: And what
 course doth he take to mollifie a flinty Heart, and
 to make a senseless sinner feel the odiousness of
 his sin, and to bend such a perverse and obstinate
 will as ours is? Why, he undergoes the most hor-
 rible sufferings, that the Ear of Man ever heard
 of; And then he causeth the History of them to
 be written and set before us; And withal, doth
 most affectionately beseech us by all these suffer-
 ings, to consider the Holty of our former Ways;
 and to lay them to heart; till we begin to yield
 such acknowledgement our sins, and are stedfastly re-
 solved to follow his Directions, and depend upon
 his Assistance, till we can perfectly overcome our
 Corruptions, and serve the Lord that made us;
 with singleness, and sincerity of heart for the fu-
 ture. To this End he gets upon his Office on purpose
 to put us in remembrance of the bitter Pangs and
 Sorrows that he hath undergone for us; And he
 hath Commanded this to be Breached publicly
 to the World. He hath moreover instituted the
 Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, to represent
 to us his sufferings to us, To tell us what Poverty
 and Shame he hath endured, what malicious U-
 sages from the Jews, how he was wounded for our
 Transgressions, and bruised for our Iniquities,

and

and how the chastisement of our peace was upon him, that through his stripes we might be healed, *Isa.* 53. 5. How the Lord laid on him the Iniquities of us all, *vers.* 6. How he was made sin for us, that knew no sin, that we might be made the Righteousness of God through him, *2 Cor.* 5. 21. How he trod the Wine-press of his Father's wrath, *Isa.* 63. 3. and drunk off the dregs of the bitter cup of his displeasure, and sweet drops of Blood, while he was conflicting with the Terroures of God's wrath; And is not that Man a block indeed, that cannot be moved with such Rhetorick as this is? Is that Man fit to be pardoned, or to find any Mercy at God's hands, that stoppeth his Ears to one that hath thus befriended him, when he is pleading with him, to make his Heart give and relent for all his former sins? It's certain, that Mans case is desperate, that will not yield to such an Argument as this is. But, alas! sad and woful experience tells us how many Thousand slight it, and are no more moved with the real story of Christ's Passion, than with a Romance or Fable, no, nor many, I fear, half so much. O how must this needs Crucifie our Lord afresh, to see his love and tender compassion so much slighted, and his Blood trampled under feet! O wretched unworthy sinner! Canst thou find in thy heart, to run the bloody Spear, and to strike the Nails afresh into his Side and Hands, and to persecute him whom God hath wounded, yea, and that for thy sin? Hast thou the Heart of a Man, or fierce Savage Beast, that canst add Sorrow to such Afflictions? Is it Nothing to thee, that he was such a Man of Sorrows, and so despised of Men, and smitten
of

of God? What? when thou thy self art the Person for which he hath borne all this? Is it no matter to thee, though he was led as a Lamb to the slaughter, and as a Sheep, dumb before the shearer? *Isa. 53. 7.* Wo to thee; that ever God made thee a Man, if thou art become such a hard-hearted Rock: He submitted to all this, that he might prevail with God, on the one side, to be reconciled unto sinners, and that he might prevail with sinners, on the other side, to repent, and be reconciled unto God: The former part of his Work he hath already done, He hath gained his Father's Consent; And wilt not thou Consent to lay by thine Enmity to God; to confess thy former sins, and to return to thy Obedience? It shall be more tolerable, surely, for the Devils themselves, that never had such Mercy offered them, in the Day of Judgment, than for such hard-hearted, impenitent sinners: But this is not all that Christ does for them, he bears with them in wonderful patience; sometimes he casts a gracious Look upon them, as once he did upon *Peter*, as if he would melt them in despatch of all their obstinacy; And seems to say to them, What, sinner, shall I suffer, and wilt thou suffer too, rather than repent and live? Shall I bleed to the very death, to save thee from destruction, and wilt thou have no Mercy upon thy self? Turn thee, Turn thee; Why wilt thou dye, O impenitent sinner? Sometimes he frowns upon the sinner, and threatens him with a sorer and heavier Condemnation, if he will not repent, and all that he might gain his Consent; He assaults him on all sides, that he might recover him by Repentance unto that happy state, which

which he doth so much desire to see him possessed of: He sets the Motives of Eternal Life and Death before him, and gives him many a precious Hour to ponder and consider them: He sends his Spirit also to knock at the door of his Heart, that he may be let in: Wo a thousand Times to that Man that will not be invited to Repentance, by all these Means: Good it had been for that Man or Woman, if they had never been born.

Sixthly, It is the End of all the Ordinances of God, and every Providence, to work this Godly Sorrow in our Minds and Hearts, and bring us to Repentance: It is the First intention of the Ministry of the Word, to kill sin in us by Repentance, and then to bring us on to the Life of Faith and Holiness: And all the Doctrines that are taught and delivered to us in the Ministry of the Word, are to drive on this Design: The Doctrine of God's Attributes and Perfections, is but the better to inform us of our Duty, and what Service is due to such a Majesty so related to us, and to qualifie and prepare our Hearts to a reverend and humble Performance of our Duty; And to shew us what a sin it is either to neglect it, or slight it over: And consequently to bring us to judge, abhor, and condemn our selves, when we have any of this Guilt upon us: All the Doctrines that concern our selves, and that teach us what we were by Nature, and what we are by Practice, and what we may be through the Grace of God and the Redemption that is in Christ Jesus, serve effectually to shame and humble us, and to break our very Hearts in the sense of that Misery that sin hath brought upon us: If God made us such beauti-

beautiful, lovely Creatures, and we have made our selves such deformed, loathsome sinners, doth it not become our Duty, and highly beseem us, to afflict our souls with the bitter remembrance thereof, especially when God offereth Mercy to such penitent afflicted sinners? All the Doctrines that concern our Brethren, what do they serve for, but to teach us the Extent of our Duty to them, and the hainousness of our sin, that have so much failed in all the respects that we owe to God and Men; That so the more distinct sight and knowledge of our sin, may make our Repentance more sound and compleat. To what end are all the Terrible Threatnings of God's Word against Sin and Sinners, but either to prevent the Sin, or else to humble the Sinner, after he is fallen under the Threatning; and to work upon the Passion of Fear, that by it the sinner may be awakened to consider what he hath done. And whither to serve all the Promises, but to perfect that work more kindly which the Fear of Judgment hath begun? There's not a Doctrine that's Preached and Published to us by the Ministry of the Word, but what comes on this very Errand, and hath a subserviency to this End, and should be effectually managed to such a purpose, by all that are intrusted with this Sacred Office.

Some helpful Considerations to provoke to the Sublime and Excellent Duty of Joy and Delight in God, To Sing his Praise, and to be Thankful to him.

Judaei dicunt prohibitum esse homini, ulla refrui in hoc Mundo, sine benedictione.

Et quicumq; fruatur re aliquâ ex hoc Mundo sine benedictione, perinde est acci spotiaret Deum: Berach: fol. 35.

Scriptures enjoyning Joy and Delight in God, with Thankfulness and Praise.

First, Joy and Delight in God.

Psal. 37. 4. Delight thy self in the Lord, and he shall give thee the desires of thine heart.

Deut. 28. 47. Because thou servedst not the Lord God with joyfulness and gladness of heart, for the abundance of all things, therefore thou shalt serve thine enemies in hunger and thirst, &c.

Phil. 4. 4. Rejoyce in the Lord always, yea, and again, I say rejoyce.

Hab. 3. 17, 18. *Although the Fig-tree should not blossom, neither should Fruit be in the Vine, though the labour of the Olive should fail, and the Field should yeild no Meat, although the Flock should be cut off from the Fold, and there should be no Herd in the Stalls: v. 18. Yet I will rejoyce in the Lord, I will joy in the God of my salvation.*

Psal. 68. 3. *But let the righteous be glad, let them rejoyce before God, yea, let them exceedingly rejoyce.*

Isa. 64. 5. *Thou meetest them that rejoyce and work righteousness.*

Rom. 14. 17. *The kingdom of God (is said there) to consist in righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.*

John 15. 11. *These things have I spoken, that my joy may remain in you, and that your joy may be full.*

1 Theff. 5. 16. *Rejoyce evermore.*

Nehem. 8. 10. *The joy of the Lord is our strength.*

Psal. 32. 11. *Be glad in the Lord, and rejoyce, ye righteous, and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart.*

Psal. 66. 1, 2. *Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands.*

Psal. 5. 11. *But let those that put their trust in thee, rejoyce; let them shout for joy, because thou defendest them; let them also that love thy Name, rejoyce in thee.*

Secondly,

Secondly, *Scriptures that command Praise.*

Pfal. 35. 28. My tongue shall speak of thy righteousness, and of thy praise, all the day long.

Pfal. 118. 28. Thou art my God, and I will praise thee ; Thou art my God, and I will exalt thee.

Pfal. 34. 1. I will bless the Lord at all times, his praise shall continually be in my mouth.

Pfal. 66. 2. Sing forth the honour of his Name, make his praise glorious.

Pfal. 66. 8. O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of his praise to be heard.

Pfal. 48. 1. Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised, in the City of our God, in the Mountain of his Holiness.

Pfal. 135. 3. Praise ye the Lord, for the Lord is good, sing praises unto his Name, for it is pleasant.

Pfal. 147. 1. Praise ye the Lord, for it is good to sing praises unto our God, for it is pleasant, and praise is comely.

Verse 12. Praise the Lord, O Jerusalem, praise thy God, O Sion.

In the 148 *Psalm*, all Creatures are called upon and excited to the praises of God, which must be meant but *objectively*, of all irrational Creatures : And rational Creatures are implied, when others that have not reason are spoken to.

Pfal. 148. 13. Praise the Name of the Lord, for his Name only is excellent, and his Glory is above the Earth and Heaven.

Pfal. 149. 1. Praise ye the Lord, sing unto the Lord a new song, and his praise in the congregation of the saints.

Pfal. 149. 6. Let the high praises of God be in their Mouth: (1) of the saints.

Pfal. 150. 1, 2, 3. Praise ye the Lord, praise God in his sanctuary, praise him in the firmament of his power.

Thirdly, Scriptures provoking to Thankfulness.

Pfal. 109. 4. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise, be thankful unto him, and speak good of his Name.

1 Thess. 5. 18. In every thing we ought to give thanks.

Col. 3. 17. Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the Name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.

Pfal. 69. 30. I will praise the Name of God with a song, and magnifie him with thanksgiving.

Pfal. 118. 1. O give thanks unto the Lord, for he is good, for his Mercy endureth for ever. Vers. 29. The same Reason is insisted on 36 times.

Psal 136. 1, 2, 3. And the Reasons largely insisted on in the rest of the Psalm.

Pfal. 26. 6, 7. I will wash mine hands in innocency, and so will I compass thine altar, O Lord, that I may publish with the voice of thanksgiving, and tell of all thy wonderful works.

Pfal. 30. 4. Sing unto the Lord, ye saints of his, and give thanks at the remembrance of his holiness.

THere's nothing that more becomes a Believer, nor so well suits his Spiritual, Heavenly Nature, nor is a better Indication of a Child of God, and one that hath attained to a perfect Man, to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ, than to delight and be skilful in this Noble Work : And without all dispute, There's nothing that a corrupt Heart is more averse and backward to, and hath less skill in : There is indeed a joyful, merry Heart, pre-requisite to this Exercise, but such a one as the World intermedleth not with ; but is the greatest stranger to, of all things you can imagine : Though there's none love Mirth and Joy so passionately, as the worldling, yet his Mirth is quite of another stamp : It's the meer distortion of the Countenance, or at best, but the dilatation of the Blood and Spirits ; It is not the delectation and contentment of the Mind and Spirit : It's the laughter of a Fool, a meer brutish, sensual delight, that they are so fond of : Not the solid, serious pleasure of a Saint, and one that is perfectly in his right mind : And thus to be merry after their Fashion, is no hard nor difficult Task ; 'Tis but be Mad, and let go the Reigns of all good Government of a Mans self ; It is but to gratifie every desire, and live at Randome, and prosper in Folly, and this will screw up a Carnal Mind to very profuse Laughter and Merriment : All the Town shall quickly hear of it, and perceive it too plainly in the Vanity, Pride, and Insolency of their Carriage : And there's no surer way, to damp and dead the Spirit of these Men, and to drive them into a melancholy, dumpish vein, than to spring

some Heavenly Discourse, that savoureth of Heavenly Wisdom, and tendeth to the Divine Praises; It's easie to vent a little Froth and Mirth, at a Feast, or in a Jovial Meeting, or when the Spirits are cheared with Wine and Carnal Pleasure: But to be glad in the Lord, to rejoyce in the meditation of his Excellent Greatness; and Perfection, even when the Flocks are cut off from the Fold, and there is no Herd in the Stall, and the Vine yieldeth not her Encrease, and the labour of the Olive doth fail, and all Earthly Comforts are wanting; Then to rejoyce in the most High, and to vent forth freely in Thanks and Praises unto him, is the Top and Perfection of Piety: But this is a strain that the merriest Worldling can never reach, while he continues to be such: Other Mirth needs great Restraint, but this hath need of all Encouragement and Promotion, it being so much above the Sphere of corrupted Nature to do it to purpose: And as some slight Praise (I doubt not) may come from the Mouth of one not yet ingrafted into Christ by a lively Faith, from the sense of Common Mercies, and General Grace: So (on the other side) even a Believer, through the weakness of his Grace, and the distemper of his Body, and the want of Exercise in this Duty, may make but little Musick, and be a very Bungler in this Work; And so lose the Comfort and Strength that a Heart, fervent and frequent in this Duty would daily get.

But before I say any thing to stir up to this Exercise, I will first shew what's requisite to, or implied in this Joy and Delight in God, and true Gratitude and Praise, I put them all together, because

because there is much Affinity and Correspondence between them : And therefore

As to the Subject of these Acts, or the Person that must exert them, he must be thus qualified and prepared :

1. He must be of an open, cheerful Temper : There's none more unfit for this Duty, than the lumpish, sad and heavy Heart : Though I deny not but sadness and heaviness of Spirit is sometimes a Duty, after the Commission of sin (especially great and wilful sin) till by renewed Sorrow, Confession, and a more cautelous Heed to prevent it for the future, and the application of Christ's Blood by Faith, the Cause of such Sadness be removed ; But a constant, habitual sadness and despondency, that neither Faith nor Reason can easily stir or command, is a great Enemy to this Duty ; He therefore that would be always fit for this Duty, must with all his Might resist the true and principal Cause of Sadness (I mean Sin) and when he cannot prevent it, he must speedily repent of it, and turn from it, and renew his Faith in Christ, and then his Soul will not refuse to be comforted, but will cheer up, and at length attain such a good measure of Alacrity, as will become Christianity, and constantly dispose him to this Duty, provided his Body be not oppressed with melancholy Fumes and Vapours : For in such Case the Art of the Physician must be joyned with the fore-mentioned Prescriptions : And such Temperance and Exercise of the Body must be used as may reduce it again, and make it fit to subserve a cheerful Mind : There's no greater pull-back, nor obstruction, to this becoming, generous, heavenly

Work, than a sower, dejected, and contracted Spirit: The *Jews* had a Proverb amongst them, that *Spiritus sanctus non descendit super Animum maestum*: which though taken without limitation, is not true; because the Spirit of God, works Godly Sorrow, and dwells in the contrite Heart that's broken for sin, to revive, comfort and bind it up again; yet, with some restriction, it contains a very great Truth, (*viz.*) That the Divine Spirit in it more Noble and Excellent Operations of Love, Joy, and Delight, and those other Affections that have a very near confederacy with these and chearful Obedience, which results from these, doth not descend upon those that are of a sad and heavy Heart, whilst such: But they are first exhilerated and cheared by the *Heavenly Comforter*, before they can get up to these higher Duties: And though *Godly Sorrow for sin*, be consistent enough with some *Spiritual Joy*, and Concomitant Affections before mentioned, whilst it keeps its just degree and measure, yet when it proceeds to Height and Excess, and goes beyond its just Bounds, it greatly indisposeth to Works of that Elevation: But the Sorrow of the World worketh Death, and is therefore very inconsistent with Works that require the greatest Life; yea, the sorrow and dejectedness that arise from the Temper and Complexion of a Melancholick Body, do very much hinder the Soul in these more sublime and raised Operations: And the more voluntary it is through the wilful neglect of Means, either Medicinal or Moral, whereby it may be shaken off, still the greater Enemy it is to the joyful Heavenly Work. When therefore we prepare for
this

this Work, 'every weight must be cast away, and the sin that presseth down, and all indisposing dulness must be shaken off, as much as may be. And therefore *Elisba*, to make way for the Holy Spirit, in these noble Operations of it, calls for a Musical Instrument, *2 Kings 3. 15.* the better to compose and exhilarate his Mind: *And it came to pass, whilst the Minstrel played, that the Hand, (that is) the Spirit of the Lord came upon him.*

2. He must be of a competent Candour and Ingenuity towards Men; One that will readily do good, and as easily acknowledge it, when it is done by others; That affects not to conceal his own Infirmities, nor the Worth of others, but can quickly spy out both; That judgeth not according to outward Appearance, but judgeth righteous Judgment; And is prone to take every thing by the right handle, and to pass the fairest construction upon every thing: He that's disingenuous and base towards Men, will be so towards God: For it is in other Affections, as it is in Love: Now he that loveth his Brother, whom he hath seen, how can he love God, whom he hath not seen? Is the Argument of the beloved Apostle, *1 John 4. 20.*

3. He must be very well contented with his Condition: None more Averse to the Duty in hand, than he that's displeased with his Estate: How can that Man be thankful unto God for any thing he hath, that liketh nothing? Male-Content filleth a Man with rage and bitterness against every thing almost, as supposing it to contribute something to his uneasie Condition: It puts him frequently

quently upon sinful study and contrivance, to better himself; And it is so far from disposing any to the sweet Temper, I am now speaking of, that it prompts him to be angry with every one; Such a one tastes no sweetness in any good he hath, be it never so great, and therefore forgets all, but his discontents: He pores wholly upon his Misery, and nothing else seems worthy his observation: And that Man that hath no eye, to observe any Comfort that he hath, will never think himself obliged to him from whom they come; and such a one is most unfit for a Thankful Acknowledgment.

4. He must have made some good progress in the work of Mortification, and be pretty well weaned from all Sublunary Good and Pleasure: That hath no strong propension to Sensual Comforts and Carnal Delights, but hath got a considerable Conquest over the Flesh, with its Affections and Lusts: And hath a Love that's rational, and doth propend most to that which most deserves it: For how can he perform the highest Acts of Spiritual Life, that is not first dead to those things, that do stifle and utterly quench the Spiritual Life? Or how can he thank God aright for any thing, that is not in a capacity to make a true judgment of what God doth bestow? which is the Case of every one, that hath his Affections inordinately wedded to these Earthly Contentments: Such a one cannot take a worldly Cross, or Reproach, and Shame, and Sicknefs, and other Afflictions, to be such Mercies as they sometimes are, nor thank God sometimes for them more heartily, than for any outward prosperity.

5. He

5. He must have a deep Sense and Perswasion of the Certainty and Excellency of Eternal Things; The Immortality of the Soul; The worth of God's Favour; The unspeakable Misery of the damned; And the Felicity of those that must live for ever with God: otherwise the Pleasures of this World are but a Dream, and the Happiness of this Life but a shadow, and all the Comforts that are tyed to this state, so fickle and unsatisfactory, that a wise and considerate Man will not much regard them, [unless as they be Pledges and Fore-runners of a better Felicity] and so cannot rise to any high pitch of Joy and Thankfulness, whilst it hath no better Materials to erect such a Frame, nor better Motives to this Duty.

Thus much for the *Matter*, or what is prerequisite to make way for these High and Heavenly Acts of Gratitude and Praise, [which are always accompanied with some degree of joy and delight in God] which formally and principally imply,

First, A due observation and worthy estimation of the Amiable Perfections of God, and of his Grace and Favours towards us; If we overlook these, and our Eyes be in the ends of the Earth; when they should be intent upon the infinite Majesty, and his Mercies towards us every Hour, and his Right in us, and over us; we shall be either tempted to deny them, or at least to deny that Homage which they call for: If we can overlook him that is all, in all, and the Spring that moves all second Causes, and sets them on work to do us that good which they do for us at any time;

No

No wonder if we commit Sacrilege, and rob God of his deserved Praises, yea, or if we undervalue them and mistake the Mercies that are more worth than Heaven and Earth, to be but petty and inconsiderable, we shall be as slight in our grateful Acknowledgment.

These two or three Things therefore are comprized in the due Reverence and Estimation of God, and his Favours.

1st. A clear and solid Apprehension of our own great Unworthiness of any the least of his Favours, and our infinite distance from his Person, not only by Nature, but much more through Guilt and Sin: we must be pretty well acquainted with our own Poverty and Baseness, and that we have nothing but from him; That All is forfeited again and again; That the Miseries of this Life, and that which is to come, are our Desert; That God can expect no Advantage from us, when he bestows his Mercies, but the pleasure of doing good; Nor when we are most cordial and diligent in his Service, but the pleasure of our receiving Good, and seeing his Grace prosper in us: And that in all his Threats and Punishments, he is still designing our Good, and mortifying our Corruption, which will otherwise be sure to ruine and undo us, if it be not forsaken: And this would teach us to prize, and thank God and our Redeemer, for every piece of Bread that we eat; and the House that covers us, and the Cloaths that warm us, the Sun that shineth on us, the Rod that corrects us, when we come to know and consider how much we need them, and how little we deserve them.

2^{ly}. It

2^{ly}. It would help us to prize all the Mercies of God, if we did but consider and understand the Misery of those that want them: We could not want the Bread we eat, nor the Air we breath, nor the Limbs we use, nor the Senses that we have, without Misery enough; But what Man could want the Grace of the Gospel, the Merits and Intercession of Christ, that knows that he is everlastingly undone without them?

3^{ly}. It will help us to estimate them rightly, if we consider what they cost, and the price that paid for them: Our sins, and the sins of our Parents (whose Flesh and Blood we are) did cry out aloud for vengeance, in the utter destruction of our Persons; And God, who is the just and righteous Governour of the World, could not, without disparagement to his Wisdom and Justice, stop his Ears to the Cry of our Sins, unless his Son had suffered for our Sins, and satisfied the Demands of his Justice, and purchased all our forfeited Mercies back again by his Blood: So that all the Temporal and Spiritual Mercies that now we have were Redeemed not with Silver and Gold, but by the precious Blood of our most endeared Saviour. And this Consideration, if it be not customary, but serious, will make every Mercy full weight, and enforce better Apprehensions of them, and Thankfulness for them.

4^{ly and lastly}, It will conduce very much to the worthy Estimation of all God's Mercies, if we consider the End God hath in All; to which he doth design every Mercy that he doth bestow in this present Life: And that is our highest Perfection, and everlasting Felicity, in a blessed Communion

munion with God for ever : Every Hour he giveth us , Every Favour , whether Common , or Special , is valued infinitely below its worth , if this Reference and Subordination be overlooked : He can never thank God , as he ought , for his Health , or Food , or Friends , or any Temporal Mercy or Affliction , but will rather be tempted to murmur and repine sometimes , that considers not well , what it is intended for , and what it may and should contribute to his endless Content and Rest : These Particulars must concur , to make up a due Estimation of all God's Mercies.

Secondly, Gratitude and Praise. with the concomitant Affections of Joy and Delight in God , do essentially imply ,

1st. A Love that's suited to and bears some proportion with the Mercies we receive , and God doth bestow on us : Temporal and Transitory Mercies must be loved with a lower and subordinate degree of our Love : Spiritual and Eternal Mercies must be loved with a higher and more absolute degree of our Love : And the highest Mercy of all (which is himself) with the most superlative and transcendent Love.

2^{ly}. And they do imply a greater Love to his Person : 1. That hath purchased them : 2. That doth confer them : He that hath no Complacency in the Things which he doth receive , and that according to the greater or lesser Tendency they have to lead him to the highest Mercy , even the Fruition of God the Giver , will have none (worth the naming) in the person that doth bestow them ; And he that wants that , can
never

never praise God as he ought, nor do any such Act with acceptance.

Thirdly, There must be some sensible Expressions of this Estimation of the Mind, and Complacency of the Will in God and his Mercies ; In the Affections and Sensible Passions of Love, Joy, Admiration, Reverence, Humility, which help and assist the Will, and cannot lye still, when the Soul is well elevated in Praises and Thanksgiving : when the Soul is exercised with any seriousness and vigour in these noble Operations of Praise, and Thanks and Complacency in God, how can it chuse but work upon the Blood and Spirits, and cause those forementioned Passions in some sensible degree ?

Fourthly, And as Thankfulness and Holy Praise, if they be right, will become *sensible*, by the Affections to the very Body to which the Soul is linked, [more or less, according as the Grace that causeth them is more or less vigorous] so they will become *visible* to others, by our more ready observance of his Will and Pleasure, a greater Zeal for his Interest, and Glory in the World, and a more chearful obedience to him, whom we thus praise and admire : And as in the Law of *Moses* there were three kinds of Sacrifice, *Immolations*, *Libations*, and *Victimes* : *Immolations* were made of the Fruits of the Earth ; *Libations* of Liquors, as Oyls and Wines ; *Victimes* of living Creatures : So the Soul that is truly Grateful, will not only offer up himself to God for a Victim ; and his Affections as it were for Liquors ; but his Actions also for Fruits.

Thanks

Thanks among Men signifie nothing, that evaporate, and melt away into meer Words and Air, and do not proceed to substantial Acts and Deeds: These are the Complements and Perfection of every true Moral Act: And if they come not up to Life and Practice, where there is opportunity, they are but meer Mockery and Deceit.

Having somewhat explicated the Nature of These Affections which are to be exercised, I proceed to the Considerations, which if seriously thought upon, have Force enough to provoke and quicken to this Exercise.

First, These Affections will stir and get strength, if thine Eye be much upon God, and all other Objects, as much as may be, be thrust out of thy Mind, I mean his Attributes, as they are expressed in his Word: For, as they are expressed in his Works, they will be some farther Assistance to this Work: His unchangeable Eternal Being: His unsearchable Wisdom: His uncontrollable Power, that can do any thing that implies not a Contradiction: His unexpressible Goodness: His spotless Purity, that abhors all unrighteousness and injustice; And the rest of his most Adorable Perfections well thought upon [according to that Description which the Holy Ghost giveth of them in the Scriptures] will raise a Soul to such a pitch, that it shall find no ease or pleasure, but in the High Praises of his Transcendent Majesty and Greatness: If the Heart be thus exercised, the Tongue that's most dumb, will be loosed, and even forced to cry out, *Thou only, O Lord, art worthy to be Adored*: For thine is the King-

Kingdom, the Power, and the Glory: A little Glimpse of this Majesty made *David*, though a Potent King, to cry out, *What is Man, that thou art mindful of him, or the Son of Man, that thou visitest him?* Psalm 8. 4. This made *Job*, who had insisted so much before upon his own Righteousness, and had stood so much upon his own Defence and Justification, then to abhor himself, when *Elihu* had presented him with some little Description of the Almighty and Independent Being. To gaze a little upon the Majesty of a King, and that Power of theirs, whereby they can do almost what they please within the Limits of their Dominions, makes some Men almost to fall down and worship them; and give them the Honour that's due only to God: And they think *Solomon's* Argument warrant enough to such Adoration; *Where the Word of a King is, there is Power; and who may say unto him, what dost thou?* Eccles. 8. 4. The Parts and excellent Abilities of some wise and knowing Men, procures them a very great Interest in the Affections and Esteem of others: How much more should it make us to wonder, and fall down, and be even swallowed up with Admiration, did we but look up, and cast our Eye upon the Beauty, Wisdom and Majesty of him that made all things, and gave the things that are most glorious among Men, that Lustre that maketh them so much to dazle their weak Eyes.

Take therefore, O my Soul! some short Transcript of the All-Glorious God, out of his own inspired Word; which upon that Account, thou mayest give the more heed and credit to.

Job 11. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by searching, find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty to Perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou understand? The Measure thereof is longer than the Earth, and broader than the Sea. Which shews us how incomprehensible he is in all his Perfections, and how far exalted beyond the Reach of our Childish Apprehensions: Not to discourage and turn away our Thoughts from him, but to humble them, and to qualifie us with due Reverence in the search of what he hath discovered and is to be known of him: That so when we have stretch'd our Understandings to the highest, we may have this to help home this Consideration, He is far more amiable and perfect than I am able to understand.

Now the Perfections of God may be cast into Three Ranks.

For they are either of his {
 1. Intellect.
 2. Will.
 3. Executive Faculty.

First, His Intellectual Perfections the Scripture thus describes:

Isa. 40. 28. and *Psal.* 147. 5. *His understanding is infinite, and there is no searching it out:* In the Original it is *לְחִבּוֹנָהּ אֵין סִפּוּר* (i.) of his understanding there's no Number; in *Isa.* it is *חִקָּר* (ii.) There's no search: All the Art we have, cannot give a perfect Account of it, or cast up the Total S m. A Figurative Expression: Therefore it's no wonder that *Solomon* tells us, There's neither

ther Wisdom, nor Understanding, nor Counsel against the Lord, *Prov.* 21. 30. Yea, the very Foolishness of God is wiser than Men, *Tb מִסּוֹפֹר*: *1 Cor.* 1. 25. And therefore he regardeth not any that are Wise in Heart, (that is) so far as to fear their Machinations and Contrivances against him, or to accept their Persons, *Job* 37. 24. For there is a bundle of Madness and Folly bound up in the wisest Heart: And our clearest Light is blemished with much Darkness: But he is Light it self, and in him there is no Darkness at all, *1 John* 1. 5. Hence he is entitled the Father of Lights, from whom all our Beams of saint and glimmering Light do proceed, *James* 1. 17. And therefore nothing is hid from his All-piercing Eye, *Psal.* 139. 1, 2, 3, 4. O Lord, thou hast searched me, and knowest me; *In Fonte*: 'Tis *חִקְרָתָנִי* *pervestigatus*, or *perscrutatus es me*: which signifies, exact and diligent search, and knowledge consequently: Thou understandest my Thoughts afar off: Thou art acquainted with all my ways: *יְהוָה יָדָרְכִי* *(i.)* Thou art familiar to, or accustomed to all my ways: There's not a Word in my Tongue, but thou, O Lord, knowest it altogether: And *Verse* 12. The darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day; the darkness and the light are both alike to thee. And *Job* 26. 6. Hell is naked before him, and destruction hath no covering: And be sure that's a place of the thickest and most palpable darkness: and therefore in Scripture it's called *outward darkness*, alluding to the *Egyptian* darkness, which was so great: For among all the Children of *Israel* there was Light; but without them, among

the *Egyptians*, palpable darknes. And *Job* 34. 22. There's no darknes, nor shadow of death, wherein the Workers of Iniquity can hide themselves from him. And *Prov.* 15. 11. Hell and destruction are before the Lord, how much more the Hearts of the Children of Men? *Heb.* 4. 12, 13. He is there said, to discern the Thoughts and Intentions of the Heart; Neither is there any Creature that is not manifest in his sight, but all things are *γυμνὰ καὶ ἀπαχρυσμένα*, naked, and as it were dissected before him: As the Entrails of any Creature, that is dissected by the Anatomist, and cut up, lye open to the Eye, which before were hid.

Secondly, The Perfections of his Will are all summ'd up in the Attribute of his *Goodness*; which contains,

1. His Bountý to all Creatures.
2. His Justice in the Righteous Administration of all things.
3. His Veracity, or Fidelity.
4. His Mercy and Compassion to all Rational Creatures.
5. His special Love to Believers.

To which I might add his *Clemency* and *Patience*.

Thirdly, The Perfection of his Executive Faculty is Omnipotency or Almightyness.

Fourthly,

Fourthly, Those Attributes which result from all these in conjunction are

His { 1. Greatness. { 3. Glory. { 5. Immutability.
 { 2. Majesty. { 4. Lordship. {

Fifthly, The Measure of all his Attributes is Infiniteness, (that is) They have no Stint nor Measure: As the Measure of his Being is Immen- sity.

Sixthly, The Crown of all his Attributes is his Eternity. Of these in order.

1. *His Bounty* the Scripture thus expresseth, Psalm 145. 15. *Thou openest thy hand, and satisfiest the desire of every living thing.* Matth. 6. 28, 29. *Consider the Lilies of the field, they toil not, neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.* And Psalm 104. 27, 28. *These wait all upon thee, [speaking of the several living Creatures] that thou mayest give them their meat in due season: Thou openest thy hand, and they are filled with good.*

2. *His Justice* in the Righteous Government of all things, the Holy Ghost thus sets forth, Psalm 89. 14. *Justice and Judgment are the Habitation of thy Throne.* And Psalm 9. 8. *He shall judge the World in Righteousness, and minister Judgment to the World in uprightness.* Jerem. 32. 19. *Thine Eyes are upon all the Ways of the Sons of Men, to give to every one according to his Ways, and ac-*

cording to the Fruit of his doings. Gen. 18. 25. Shall not the Judge of all the Earth do right? Rev. 15. 3. Just and true are thy ways, thou King of Saints.

3. His Veracity is thus described :

Numb. 23. 19. He is not as a Man, that he should lye; Hath he said it, and spoken it, and shall it not be made good? Rom. 3. 4. God is true, and every man a lyar. Heb. 10. 23. God is faithful, who hath promised: πιστός ἐστιν ὁ κατανομιόμενος. He is to be credited or believed. Psalm 138. 2. I will worship towards thy Holy Temple, and praise thy Name for thy Loving-kindness, and for thy Truth, for thou hast magnified thy Word above all thy Name. Psalm 86. 15. But thou, O Lord, art plenteous in Mercy, and in Truth.

4. His Mercy and Compassion to all Rational Creatures is thus expressed: John 3. 16. God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. Ezek. 33. 11. As I live, saith the Lord, I have no pleasure in him that dyeth, or in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live: Turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, For why will ye dye? 1 Tim. 2. 4. There it's said, that God would have all to be saved, and to come to the knowledge of the Truth.

Besides,

1. All those Scriptures that express the Death of Christ for sinners, without limitation, serve to this purpose, such as 1 Tim. 2. 6. Who gave himself a Ransome for all Men, &c.

2. All

2. All those Scriptures that contain a Commission to Preach the Gospel to all the World, without Exception, magnifie this Attribute to the full, and make it shine forth gloriously; such as *Matth. 28. 19. Go ye therefore and teach all Nations, &c.*

3. Likewise all those Scriptures that promise Pardon and Salvation, upon the Conditions of Repentance and Faith, not excluding any from these Terms, are a lively demonstration of this lovely Attribute; such as *1 John 12. As many as received him, to them gave he Power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name.*

4. So likewise all those Scriptures that set forth the Patience of God towards sinners in general, may be reduced hither, and serve under this Head:

5. Lastly, All those Scriptures that insist upon the Common Providences of God towards wicked Men, and his veriest Enemies, in supplying all their Necessities, and giving them such a large portion of these outward Comforts, bear ample Testimony to this Attribute, and do very much exalt it: such as *Matth. 5. 45. where God is said to make the Sun to shine upon the Evil and upon the Good, and to send Rain on the just and on the unjust.*

5. *His Special Love to Believers*, the Holy Ghost thus describeth:

Deut. 33. 29. The Lord is the shield of their help, and the sword of their excellency. Psal. 94. 14. God will not cast off his Saints, nor forsake his Inheritance. And Psal. 149 4. The Lord taketh plea-

sure

sure in his people, and will beautifie them with salvation. And Psal. 1. last. *The Lord knoweth (i.) approveth the way of the Righteous.* Isa. 49. 16. *There they are said to be graven on the Palms of his Hands, and their Walls are ever in his sight.* And Vers. 15. *It's said God cannot, and will not forget them.* Moreover,

1. All those Scriptures that entitle them to Pardon, Reconciliation, Adoption, and Glory, Comfort in all Conditions, and a blessed Issue out of all their Troubles, be they more or less, and that entail a Blessing upon their Seed and Posterity, are a sufficient proof of God's special Love to Believers, and set it forth illustriously; such as Psalm 97. 11. *Light is sown for the righteous, and gladness for the upright in heart.* Psal. 37. 37. *Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace.* Eccles. 8. 12, 13. *Though a sinner do evil an hundred times, and his days be prolonged, yet surely I know, that it shall be well with them that fear God, which fear before him, &c.* Psal. 102. 28. *The children of thy servants shall continue, and their seed shall be established before thee.* Rom. 8. 1. *There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit.* Psal. 125. 1, 2. *They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Sion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever: As the mountains are round about Jerusalem, so the Lord is round about his people, from henceforth, and for ever.* Rom. 8. 28. *All things work together for their good.* And Gal. 4. 6. *Because they are sons, God will send forth the Spirit of his Son into their hearts.*

2. All those Scriptures that contain their special relations unto God, and Priviledges founded thereupon, do lively set forth God's special Love to them.

Sixthly, His Almightyness the Scripture thus expresseth; besides the places where he is expressly styled Almighty: *Ephes. 3. 20. He is able to do abundantly above what we can think or speak. Job 26. 14. The thunder of his power who can understand? Prov. 21. 30. There is no wisdom, power, nor understanding against him. Jerem. 27. 5. He hath made the Earth, and all that therein is, by his great power. Isa. 40. 22, 23. It is he that sitteth upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as Grass-hoppers; that stretcheth out the heavens as a curtain, and spreadeth them out as a tent to dwell in: That bringeth the Princes to nothing, and maketh the Judges of the Earth as vanity. Heb. 1. 3. God is there said to uphold all things by the word of his power.*

All those Scriptures that assert the Creation of the World, or any part of it by God; The Division of the Sea, or other Waters miraculously: The strange Destruction of *Sodom and Gomorrha*: The Inundation of the Old World: The Confusion of Languages: The doing things against the Course of Nature; such as are Raising the Dead to Life, Restoring the Blind: Or above Nature, such as are most of the Plagues that beset *Egypt*, amply describe his Infinite Power: And *Rom. 1. 20. His Eternal Power and God-head* are there said to be seen in the Creation of the World.

Seventhly,

*Seventhly, The Measure of himself is Immen-
sity: And of all his Attributes is Infiniteness,
(that is) They have neither Bounds nor Mea-
sure.*

1. *His Immensity is thus set forth by the Holy
Ghost in Scripture, 1 Kings 8. 27. But will God
indeed dwell on the Earth? Behold the Heaven and
Heaven of Heavens cannot contain thee, how much
less this House that I have builded? So 2 Chron. 2. 6.
to the same purport. So Psalm 139. 7, 8, 9, 10.
Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall
I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into Heaven,
thou art there; if I make my Bed in Hell, thou art
there: If I take the wings of the Morning, and dwell
in the uttermost parts of the Sea, even there shall thy
hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me. So
Amos 9. 2, 3, 4.*

2. *The infinity of all his Attributes, Psal. 147. 5.
Great is our Lord, and of great power, and his un-
derstanding is infinite; And if one Attribute be
infinite, needs must all the rest be so: and there-
fore Zophar may well propose it as a Query unca-
pable of solution; Job 11. 7, 8, 9. Canst thou by
searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Al-
mighty to perfection? It is as high as Heaven, what
canst thou do? Deeper than Hell, what canst thou
understand? The measure thereof is longer than the
Earth and broader than the Sea: See Job 37. 23.*

*Eighthly, His Attributes, that result from all
these, are,*

1. *His Immutability, which the Holy Ghost
describes, James 1. 17. Every good gift, and every
perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the
Father of Lights, in whom is no variableness, neither
shadow*

shadow of turning. And *Malach.* 3. 6. *I am the Lord, I change not : therefore the sons of Jacob are not consumed:* *Psal.* 102. 27.

2. *His Greatness*, which the Scripture thus describeth, *Psal.* 145. 36. *The Lord is great and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable ; he is to be feared above all Gods.* And *1 Chron.* 15. 25. and *Jerem.* 10. 6. *There is none like unto the Lord, great in might.* *Dan.* 9. 4. *He is the great and dreadful God, keeping covenant and mercy to them that love him.* *Psal.* 77. 13. *There is none so great as our God.* *Psal.* 48. 1. *Great is the Lord, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God, in the mountain of his holiness.*

3. *His Majesty* is thus described : *O Lord my God, thou art very great, thou art clothed with majesty and honour,* *Psal.* 104. 1. *Thine, O Lord, is the greatness, and the power, and the glory, and the majesty,* *1 Chron.* 29. 11. *And Elihu tells us, that with God is terrible majesty.* *Job* 37. 22. and *Psal.* 96. 6. *Honour and majesty are before him, strength and beauty are in his sanctuary.* And *Psal.* 145. 10, 11, 12, 13. *All thy works shall praise thee, O Lord, &c. They shall speak of the glory of thy kingdom, and talk of thy power : To make known to the sons of men his mighty acts, and the glorious majesty of his kingdom : Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all generations.*

4. *His Glory* the Scripture thus expresseth : *Psal.* 138. 5. *Great is the glory of the Lord.* And *Psal.* 148. 13. *Let them praise the Name of the Lord, [that is the forementioned Creatures] for his Name only is excellent, and his glory is above the*
Earth

Earth and the Heaven. And *Isa.* 6. 3. *Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of Hosts, the whole Earth is full of his glory.* *Exod.* 15. 11. *The Lord is there said to be glorious in holiness, fearful in praises, doing wonders.*

5. *His Lordship and Dominion over all is thus described, Isa.* 33. 22. *The Lord is our Judge, the Lord is our Law-giver, the Lord is our King.* *Psal.* 97. 5. *Thou art the Lord of the whole Earth.* And *Dan.* 2. 47. *He is there said to be a God of Gods, a Lord of Kings, a revealer of secrets.* *Psal.* 47. 2. *The Lord most high is terrible, he is a great King over all the Earth.* *Psal.* 103. 19. *The Lord hath prepared his throne in heaven, and his kingdom ruleth over all.* *Psal.* 145. 13. *Thy kingdom is an everlasting kingdom, and thy dominion endureth throughout all ages.* And *Rom.* 91. 1. *The Apostle tells us, there is no power, but of God.* *Prov.* 8. 15, 16. *By him Kings reign, and Princes decree justice; By him Princes rule, the Nobles and Judges of the Earth.* *Matth.* 6. 13. *Thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory.*

Lastly, *His Eternity, the Crown of all, is thus described: Exod.* 15. 18. *The Lord shall reign for ever and ever.* And *Psal.* 45. 6. *Thy throne, O Lord, is for ever and ever, the scepter of thy kingdom is a right scepter.* *Psal.* 90. 2. *Before the mountains were brought forth, or ever thou hadst formed the Earth, and the World, thou art God from everlasting, to everlasting: (i.) a parte ante, and a parte post, without beginning, and without end.* *Psal.* 93. 2. *Thy throne is established of old, thou art from everlasting.* *Psal.* 102. 27. *Thou art the same, [viz. in opposition to mutable Creatures] and thy*

thy years shall have no end. Psal. 104. 31. *The glory of the Lord shall endure for ever, &c.* Dan. 4. 9. *His kingdom is an everlasting kingdom.* Psal. 106. 10. *The Lord shall reign for ever, even thy God, O Sion, throughout all generations.* Dan. 8. 18. *His dominion shall be for ever unto the end.*

These glorious Attributes of God, especially as they stand in conjunction, and shine upon one another, calmly considered, will mount and elevate an ingenuous and understanding Heart, and wing it to this high and honourable employment.

Secondly, It will help on this blessed, heavenly Work and Temper of Joy and Delight in God, honourable and thankful thoughts, and mention of him, to behold his Attributes, as they are further displayed in his Works: Particularly his *Bounty, Wisdom, Power*

Towards the { 1. Irrational } Creatures.
 { 2. Rational }

1st. It will something advance the dullest heart, and dispose it to rejoyce in God, and lift it up in praise and thankfulness to him, to steep it a little in the meditation of that incomparable wisdom that shineth forth in the *Being* of every irrational Creature, especially in the whole frame and orderly connection of all such Creatures: Every Creature in its single existence, hath treasure enough to enrich the understanding of the wisest Man on earth, if it search into the depth and bottom of it, and to imprint admiring, reverent,
and

and thankful Inclinations towards him in the Heart: There's not a Pile of Grass that shoots up, but directs the Eye Heavenward, [towards which it pointeth up] unless it be kept shut by ignorance and inconsideration. What excellent skill and cunning is there in the curious Fabrick and Composure of the basest and most contemptible Creature, especially if we do not overlook the uses for which it serves? Even a Toad hath far more in it to be admired by the Intellect, than it hath to be abhorred by the Sense. The senseless and inanimate Creatures are no idle Parts of the World, but have enough in them to reproach and shame an idle Spectatour: There's not one of them but wears the *Livery* of their most wise and wonderful Creatour; and carries the *Badge* and *Cognizance* of that infinite Wisdom that did at first contrive and make them, and fitted them to their proper and peculiar uses. Read over the *History of Minerals*, and do but look into an *Herbal*, where a little of the Nature and Vertue of *Vegetables* is described: search a little into the Writers of *Zoography*, where the Nature and Properties of *Animals* are somewhat, though imperfectly represented, and under each of these are infinite particulars, which magnific the Wisdom of their *Glorious Maker*, and set it forth to the life to every intelligent Spectatour. Since then the Brutish and Inanimate Creatures are not in a Capacity to do this Homage to their Creatour, by *direct and proper Acknowledgment and express Adoration and Thanksgiving*, it's comely for us to pay that Debt, for whose use and service they were made and intended, and to whose Intellect and Senses, they
are

are objected for the perfecting of them: It's by our Tongues and Hearts, that these Creatures must return him the Tribute of their Praises. Can we be content to behold such rare pieces of Divine Skill and Artifice, and not turn up a thankful Eye, nor erect an adoring Thought, nor send up a joyful Hallelujah to him? Whether we look upon the World in the Gross, or in the Retail; in the several parts of it, or as they are all joyned and set together in a curious Frame; what stupendious wisdom, what rare and admirable skill do they display, and call us to behold and consider? Had we but the Faculty to search into those rich Mines, and dig out those Treasures of Wisdom and Knowledge, that are hid in them, [as every one may do in some degree, if he set himself seriously to consider them] what an Acknowledgment would the most contemptible Creature extort from us?

1. The Matter of which they do consist. 2. The curious Contexture of their Parts. 3. The Manner of their Production. And then 4. The Means of their Continuance and Preservation. Then 5. Their Operations both Actual and Potential. 6. And the Ends to which they are both immediately and remotely subservient, are Heads, which a little considered, will advance the Heart, and tune the Affections and Tongue, to the Praises of him that liveth for ever and ever, who hath brought all these things to pass, and even compel him to say, *Psalm 104. 14. How manifold are thy works, O Lord, in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches.* To look down upon this round Ball of Earth, that hangs upon nothing, that hath no other Pillars to prop it up, than the
imme-

immediate power of him that made it ; And to look up upon the vast Canopy of Heaven, spread over it ; Or the abundance of Waters, gathered together in a heap, and placed in the depth, as in a store-house, *Psal.* 33. 7. Or to cast an eye upon any one Creature, that dwelleth in any of these Mansions, will draw forth a Song of Praise and Thanksgiving, unless it be from one that's far gone in the Disease of Atheism and Ungodliness : But to consider them all in one united Frame, their Order and Connection, and the Beauty that results from that Order, and how they meet together in one *Common Center*, and are linked together in *one great and ultimate End*, which all of them conspire to promote [though their proximate and nearest Ends are so various and almost innumerable] will raise a Soul, not basely captivated to the Body, yet higher. If I should insist upon the Contrariety that is among the several Creatures, and how one Contrary is ballanced by another : If I should stand upon the Harmony that ariseth from the very discord of things, of a very different nature, this would not a little set forth the wisdom of God.

2. It will very much quicken a Soul to the Praises of God, and to joy and delight in him, to consider his Bounty, and Goodness, to all his Creatures, even the worst and vilest of them, from whom they have their Being and Support, together with their several Virtues and Perfections : To him the lifeless and inanimate Creatures owe their Subsistence, together with their several Adjuncts and Properties, whereby they are variously modified and distinguished ; He hath imparted

imparted that Life to the order of *Vegetables* which they have, and whereby they become serviceable to Man and Beast. It's from the same Hand that those Higher Perfections of Sense and Motion are bestowed upon the *Order of Sensitive Creatures*, which his Wisdom hath distinguished into such various and almost infinite kinds, every one whereof hath a large share and portion of his Bounty : *The Lord doth good to all, and his tender mercies are over all his works*, Psal. 145. 9. *The earth is full of the goodness of the Lord*, Psal. 33. 5. How liberal hath he been to the Heavens, upon which he hath bestowed all the Glory that Sun and Moon, and those glistering Cressets that shine therein contribute : These he hath covered with Light, as with a Garment, and made of a more refined Matter, than what's seen here below ; and these he hath honoured to become his Footstool. Yea, and how bountiful hath he been to this inferior Part of the Creation ? What a fertile Womb hath he bestowed upon the Earth, which brings forth yearly such a plentiful Off-spring and Encrease ? What Minerals and Vegetables is she the Parent of ? Some whereof she perpetually bears in her Womb, and there feedeth them : Others she continually carries in her Bosom, and there suckles them : And what she doth not bring forth, she bringeth up, (as the several Animals, *Rational* and *Irrational*) which she perpetually provideth for : And as he hath dealt thus bountifully with the *Heavens* and the *Earth*, so the Ocean comes not much behind in the share he hath bestowed upon it : And therefore when the *Psalmist* had copiously insisted upon God's Bounty and

Munificence towards the Earth, and eased himself in a pathetic Exclamation, (*viz.*) *O Lord, how wonderful are thy works, in wisdom hast thou made them all; the earth is full of thy riches, Psal. 104. 24.* He proceeds, *so is this great and wide sea also, wherein are things creeping innumerable, both small and great beasts: there go the ships also, vers. 26.* As he hath lodged innumerable sorts of Fishes in the Ocean, so he hath made it a famous Boundary, to divide the several Kingdoms of the World; and a quick Passage for the Nations, that inhabit the Earth, to Traffick and Commerce with each other: There be many other ways in which God hath expressed his Bounty and Munificence to this *Watry Element*: It would take up a Volumn to descend to particulars, and to shew you the Bounty of God, to the *Four Elements*, (as they are called) of which all other Creatures, that have their general Rendezvouz either in the Earth, Water, or Air, are compounded; whether they be Lifeless, Vegetative, Sensitive or Rational, and to tell you the Glory that God hath put upon them: And then to proceed to the several Creatures in their order: This would be to write the whole History of Nature: A little of this knowledge was that which the Philosophers and Wise-men of the World so much gloried in: But yet though it was so much beyond their reach, to bring in a compleat Inventory of all those costly Utensils, wherewith God hath so richly furnished and adorned this his great Family of Heaven and Earth, and much more would it puzzle them to shew you the Cost that is expended, and laid out upon each of these, and to discover their worth and usefulness.

yet let but a vulgar eye go forth, and look about him, and view the Fields, and therein the Trees; the Grass, the various Herbage, so verdant to the eye, so fragrant to the smell, and every one so useful to the Ends of Food and Physick, even such a one, if he have any Spiritual Life, or Sense in him, shall not want Arguments for number or weight, able to convince him, and to enforce a Confession of God's Bounty to these Creatures: But let him behold the various Fruits and Flowers that every Orchard or Garden almost will present him with, let him but consider the beautiful Rose and Tulip, or rather to take the Scripture-Instance, let him look upon the fair Lilly, and he must needs say, if he understand any thing, *That Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these*, Matth. 6. 29. or if he will believe the Word of God: These Vegetables have such a natural Grace and Beauty, that all the Art and Wit of Man cannot imitate, much less out-do. To say nothing of the dead and inanimate Creatures, both above and under Ground, of which such Essences, Spirits, and Magisteries, and other Extracts are prepared, by the Still, and other ways, that Art and Industry hath discovered; No nor to mention any of the sensitive or more noble Creatures; No nor of those intermediate, bordering, and amphibious Creatures, that come between these several kinds, that lay claim to both, and belong to neither, such as are the *Minerals that grow like the Vegetables*: And the *Plant animals*, that partake partly of the Vegetative, and partly of the Sensitive Nature, &c. Upon every one of which God hath bestowed various Vertues and Perfections: But

I have touch'd only upon Generals, and left the Particulars to be the Subject of your more distinct Meditations, as you shall occasionally light on them.

3. The omnipotency and infinite power of God is no less conspicuous in these several Creatures, than the other two Attributes of his Wisdom and Goodness, to a seeing eye, and as fit to assist in the Praises of God, as the other: Power is the thing that all Men adore, and aspire to, and would purchase at any rate: Even those that can condemn Riches, and Sensual Pleasures, which most Men follow after, and are led by like Beasts, yet are very ambitious of Power; As being the best Instrument to compass any thing that the Will can desire: Well then, here is Power to be seen in its highest glory, and its utmost perfection: Alas! that Idol we so much adore in Men, is but a shadow and faint resemblance of that infinite and unlimited power, that God was eternally invested with; that's guided by as immense a Wisdom, and as perfect a Goodness, and therefore cannot possibly be mischievous and oppressive: Power in Man and other Creatures is oft-times pernicious, both to themselves and others, for want of equal Wisdom and Goodness to guide and ballance it: And yet take all their Power together, in the widest and wildest Notion, the greatest Lord and Emperour of the World, hath but a silly, weak, and contemptible power, in respect of that which God is possessed of, and the Attribute of his Almightyness doth import, and which he hath displayed in the eye-sight of all intelligent Creatures: And this may be seen without any great pains or labour,

labour, in the Make or Fabrick of every Creature, and the production of so many Beings, as the World abounds with, out of meer nothing: Let *Paracelsus* and the *Rose-Crucians* boast, that they can produce Man, or any other Creature, by their Chymical Skill and Artifice; These are but Boasts, and if they can do any thing that way, which will deserve some admiration; It will come as far short of God's Workmanship, as Art is from Nature, or rather finite from infinite: They must have Matter to work upon, and several Tools to work with: But the infinite Power hath brought to pass these mighty and wonderful Effects, that are every where so visible, without the help of either Matter or Tool, or any the least Assistance: O what a Power is that must make an invisible Vapour, that fumes out of the Earth, to grow into the visible Bulk of Plant or Herb! and to aspire into a Tree, spreading forth it self into so many Shoots and Branches! And that the same Vapour should secretly convey it self, through every Bough and Leaf of this Tree, for its continual Growth and Nourishment! That this subtil Spirit should produce so many various Shapes, and such different Vertues in the several Plants! and die them with such various and almost infinite Colours! That a Vapour that seems so contemptible, should set forth the Lilly in white, and cloth the Violet in such a purple dress! But what do I speak of these? What a Power is that, that hath hung such a vast Body, as the Earth, upon nothing, in the midst of the Air! That hath made it so immovable, though it hath no Pillars to support it, nor any *Basis* whereon to rest! That hath

shut up the vast Ocean in the deep, as in a Store-house, *Psalms* 33. 7. And gathered the Waters of the Sea together in a heap! That hath stinted the proud Waves thereof, and bounded their swelling rage and fury! *Job* 38. 11. What a Power is it that ballanceth the Clouds, and useth them as a Swadling-band, to wrap up and hold in the Waters over our Heads, that they are not rent under such a mighty Load! *Job* 38. 9. It would amaze and even confound the understanding of Man, seriously to think, how such a vast Body as the Sun, that's 166 times bigger than the Earth, should go over the whole Circle of the Heavens, in the space of 24 Hours:

The Sun is said
to move every
Hour 1038442
of Miles.

that is one Million of Miles every Hour: which being so incredible to Mans understanding, late Philosophers have found out a new way, and would have the Earth move about, and the Heavens to stand still, which if it be supposed, yet must be the effect of an infinite Power: It's the description that's usually given of a wise Man, That he is one that wonders at nothing, because they suppose Ignorance to be the Cause of wonder: And therefore the more we know and understand any thing, the less we wonder at it: But yet for all this, I may take the boldness to say, That he is a wise Man indeed, that wonders not at every thing: Especially if he be one that hath Wit enough to see the impregnable Difficulties; that stand in the way, and hinder a distinct and perfect understanding of any the least of God's Works.

And this is another Consideration, that will
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do good service, in provoking us to the Praises of the Lord, if it be weighed with an undisturbed silence and attention.

2. As it will advance a Heart in Praises and Thanksgiving to God, and help on this noblest part of God's Worship; to behold these *Three great Attributes* of his Wisdom, Goodness and Power, as they shine forth in the Works of Creation and Providence, about the unreasonable Creatures; So 2. It will elevate a Soul yet higher, and make it more fit for the work of Thankfulness and Praise, to ponder *these Attributes* as they are made glorious in and about the reasonable and intelligent Creatures: And here I shall pass over the Angels, the most noble Creatures, which God hath made: And because this is an Argument most likely to move us with the greatest force; Let us more particularly insist upon his Goodness towards us:

1. In giving us a Nobler Being than he hath done to any other visible Creature: He hath stamped his Image upon Man more lively, than he hath done upon any Creature; if you look on him barely in his *Natural Capacity*, as consisting of a Body and Soul, The one Corruptible, The other Incorruptible: The first he hath in Common with other Creatures, but the other is a peculiar Glory, that God hath put upon no other Creature here below besides himself: And yet in his very Body he far surpasseth all his Fellow-Creatures: If you consider well the Comeliness and Proportion of Parts, the well mixing of the Humours, that give the Colour, and the pure lively Spirit that gives Air and Motion to the several Parts, his erect

figure, and the symmetry of the whole; To say nothing of Speech that's peculiar to Man alone, all other Creatures must submit and bow before him: But as to his *Moral Capacity*, There's no other Creature here below, that hath any Lineament of his Maker's Image, but Man only: He alone was intended to represent his Maker in *Righteousness and true Holiness*; and had a Capacity first to be honoured in his Service, and to be made happy in his Eternal Enjoyment: The rest of the Creatures, as they have their Face downward, so they have no disposition to look so high as to their Maker, nor any tendency of love or desire towards him: For God having made them incapable of any such Acts or Habits, expects no such Service at their Hands: But God made Man for his own immediate Service, and therefore gave him a Nature suited to that employment: He did not only bestow on him the Faculties of Understanding and Will, but endued them with the knowledge and love of God, that by the exercise of these Acts, he might find out the *Rest and Happiness* that he doth so indefatigably seek after.

2. He gave him Seigniorship and Dominion over this lower World, *Psalms 8*. As all things were made for his use and service, so they were given into his hand to dispose of; And they had no power to cross his Command, or disobey, till he had rebelled against his Maker. They were all ready at his service, to go and come at his beck, and to execute his pleasure to their utmost strength and capacity: *Gen. 1. 28. And God blessed them, (that is Adam and Eve) and said to them, Be fruitful, and*

And multiply, and replenish the Earth, and subdue it, And have dominion over the Fish of the Sea, and over the Fowl of the Air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the Earth. See also Gen. 2. 19, 20. And Man wanted not the Faculty to discern the Nature and Vertue of every Creature, and for what uses they might serve: Yea, the Inferiour Heavens were made to accommodate him, and every way God dealt with him as a *Bountiful Lord*, and most *Liberal Benefactor*: The Sun was made to enlighten him, and the Heavens to chear him, and make the Earth fruitful with their Influences, which was to bring him forth its various Productions, for his several uses and occasions: And who, that hath the Heart of a Man, and not of a Beast, can think of such Munificence and Bounty, which God hath exercised towards him, and not abhor ingratitude? And even feel himself delighted in the Praises of his so great Benefactor?

3. When he had undone himself, and had involved his Soul and Body in Misery unspeakable, the Lord did not utterly forsake him, (as he deserved, but he set his Wisdom a work, to contrive a way, how to salve the honour of his Justice, and yet save the miserable Rebels from destruction; When we were all fallen short of the Glory of God, he found out a Method to recover us into Happiness again: And when no Creature in Heaven or Earth, could do such a Favour for us, the Son of God became Man and dyed for us, that he might satisfy offended Justice, and vindicate the honour both of the Law, and Law-giver, and procure Terms of Peace and Favour for

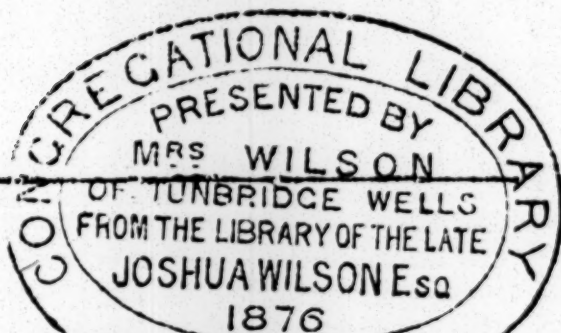
for us: O, what a *Remarkable Sentence* is that, which should be engraven upon the Heart of every sinner: *When we were without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly*, Rom. 5. 6. *This is a faithful saying indeed, and worthy of all acceptance*, (1. highest and most thankful entertainment) *that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners*, 1 Tim. 4. 9, 10. We had been now bound hand and foot, and shut up in outward darkness, and had been Fuel to the Wrath of God, and the Flames of Hell, which are kindled thereby, and had been tormenting our Souls with the bitter remembrance of our sin, who are, or may be comforted with the blessed Tydings of the Gospel. What a comfortable Thought should it be to us, when we lye down, and when we rise up, to remember, *that Christ is risen from the dead, and become the first-fruits of them that sleep*, 1 Cor. 15. 20. To understand which Text of Scripture, it's necessary that we be informed, that sin having brought a Curse upon Man, and upon the Earth, for his sake, and all the Fruit it brought forth, the Sacrifice of the First-Fruits among the *Jews*, (to which the Apostle here alludes) was appointed by God as a Means whereby the whole Harvest might be sanctified and secured, and the Curse removed; Which First-Fruits were a Type of Christ, by whose death, the sting of death is taken out, and by whose Resurrection ours is secured, even the Resurrection to Life, to all his true and faithful Members: And as the First-Fruits were (as it were) the Pledge and Earnest of the Harvest, that was to follow after, so the Resurrection of Christ is the Gage and Assurance of ours.

4. Having not spared his Son, but given him a ranfome for us, he hath with him given us all other things, we receive Mercies without number from him every day : And that 1. *Privative*, in guarding us from the many Mischiefs that the desert of our sin, and the desire and endeavour of our Enemies would bring upon us : And 2. *Positive*, in bestowing on us the good things which we deserve not, and which the malice of our Enemies would keep from us : How many dangers have we oft-times escaped, which we have both known and feared, but they are far more that we have escaped, which we have neither known nor feared ? We see not the Enemies that lurk continually about our Paths and Beds, and that are always plotting and endeavouring to devour us, which the secret Power of one that's stronger than they hath hitherto prevented : How oft hath Satan thirsted for our Blood, and desired to sift us as Wheat, But Christ hath interceded for us, and infatuated all his Counsels that they have not prospered hitherto : When he hath dug low, to hide his Counsel from the Lord, and laid his design deep, and covered it with the greatest cunning and secrecie, when he hath thought certainly now he should prevail, and swallow us up, he hath mis'd his purpose, and gone away disappointed, and God hath shewed us a way how to escape. Every Beam of Light that shineth on us, every Breath we fetch, every Minutes Health we do enjoy, every Bit we eat and are refreshed with, the House that covereth us, the Air that we suck in, the Bed we lye on, the Friends that comfort us, every Sweetness that we tast, either in the Acts
of

of Sense or Understanding, together with the continuance of all our Faculties; In a word, every Comfort that befriendeth us, is a distinct Mercy of God, vouchsafed to us in Jesus Christ. What shall I say? How numberless are these which I have but generally touched? If I should insist upon the several Circumstances and Degrees of them, with the frequent Repetition of every one of them: But these are not the one half of what our Redeemer doth bestow: The Mercies that concern our Souls are far more numberless: So that though I have seemed to name but three or four Instances of the Bounty of God towards us, yet these are all so comprehensive, (especially those of Creation, Redemption, and Providence) that they contain more under them, than can be reckoned up in the Individuals, by any humane Art or Skill: There are some few of those infinite ways, whereby God's goodness is demonstrated to us. I might further shew, how much the goodness of God is manifest towards us in all our Sufferings, Streights, Necessities, Afflictions, Sickness, Death, which breed the only quarrel between us and the goodness of the Lord, and will not let us speak out and acknowledge it freely, as we ought: It's easie to vindicate the goodness of the Lord even in these, to such as will but bring an impartial ear.

Neither doth his Wisdom and Power towards us; come much behind his goodness: Doth it not require infinite Wisdom and Power, to govern such a perverse piece as sin hath made Man to be? And to make him serviceable, either willingly, or without his Will, to the glorious Ends of Order and

and Government in the World? And that both in his Commerce 1. with God, 2. with Men, 3. with other Creatures; either bridling or conquering his Corruptions, (without any impeachment of his liberty) that they do not confound and destroy all Piety, Justice, and Sobriety out of the World: It must be no less than the Power of God, that must bring down the Proud, that would otherwise trample all under feet; That must govern the Savage Nations, and tame and restrain the barbarous and bloody minds, and make the wretched devices of the Enemies of his Church to be of none effect: It must be a mighty Power indeed, that must turn a furious, persecuting *Saul*, into an humble, penitent, and faithful *Saul*: What a wisdom is seen, in making Man so great, and yet so little? in designing him for so high an end, and yet training him up for it by such low and despicable means? But I will run out no further on this Argument, lest I find no end.



FINIS.